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THE GORDON LESTER FORD
COLLECTION
FROM EMILY E. F. SKEEL
IN MEMORY OF
ROSWELL SKEEL, Jr.
AND THEIR FOUR PARENTS

ROSWELL · EMILY E F SKEEL

[redacted]

swell & Emily E. F. Skeel

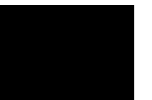
nov. 1904,

THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

EDGAR ALLAN POE

VOLUME I.



EDGAR ALLAN POE.

From painting by Samuel S. Osgood, owned by the New York Historical Society

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF Edgar Allan Poe

EDITED BY

JAMES A. HARRISON

Professor in the University of Virginia

I

BIOGRAPHY
CONTEMPORARY NOTICES

The University Society

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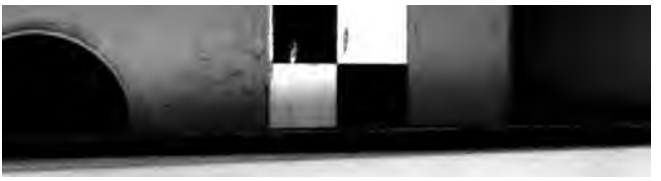

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE present edition of Poe is based upon the poet's own statement of what he deemed fundamental in any reissue of his works: "I am naturally anxious that what I have written should circulate as I wrote it, if it circulate at all."

This pregnant sentence — from the Preface to the 1845 edition of the Poems — has been constantly kept in mind by the editor during the preparation of this work, and no pains have been spared to apply it practically.

After a thorough examination of all the existing editions of Poe's works, the editor became convinced that no satisfactory text of the poet's writings could be established without direct study of the original sources in which these writings first and last appeared. Existing editions conflicted in so many points that no course was left except to reject them all — beginning with Griswold, whom all had more or less faithfully followed — and extract a new and absolutely authentic text from the magazines, periodicals, and books of tales and poems which Poe himself had edited or to which he had contributed. Having laid down this canon at the very start, the editor proceeded in the following detail: —

TALES.

The chronological order of the tales being established, each tale was made the subject of a separate and prolonged study in its successive appearances in magazine, periodical or volume form, the variants were carefully noted, and that form of the text was selected which had, directly or indirectly, the sanction of Poe himself.

Thus, for the great bulk of the tales, the "Broadway Journal" form, with Poe's MS. annotations, and the form corrected in Poe's handwriting, as found in the J. Lorimer Graham copy of the edition of 1845, were adopted as the final form of the text. In two or three instances only — in the case of "The Balloon Hoax" and "The Gold-Bug" — the editor has used the Griswold version, because the file of the "New York Sun," in which the former appeared, was missing from the "Sun" office and could not be consulted, and "The Dollar Newspaper," in which "The Gold-Bug" appeared, could not be found.

Though these were the texts adopted, all the republications of separate stories running through the "Southern Literary Messenger," "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine," "Graham's" and "Godey's" magazines, and other sources, were separately studied, and the variants set down in the abundant Notes which Dr. Stewart and the editor have added to Volumes II., III., IV., V., and VI., of this edition. Poe's orthography, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing have been restored, only obvious misprints being corrected and spelling of words in foreign languages being given in their rectified form.

The divergences, therefore, between this and the

Griswold text will be immediately explicable: no liberties have been taken with Poe; he has been allowed for the first time to speak absolutely for himself. Discrepancies, where they occur, as they do occur frequently in spelling, are due to the fluctuating systems of orthography prevalent between 1834 and 1849. Whether this orthography is due to Poe or to his printer, cannot be determined; but the proofs at any rate of the "Broadway Journal," of which he was virtually editor almost from the start, and of the volumes of "Arthur Gordon Pym," of the Tales of 1840, and of those of 1845, must have passed under his immediate eye and received his final corrections. The editor has also collated the original MS. of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," belonging to the Drexel Institute, and prints from Poe's own unpublished MS. his "Folio Club," evidently the long-lost or overlooked introduction to his "Tales of the Folio Club," — a fragment, but a striking fragment.

POEMS.

Each poem of the fortyeight has, in similar manner, been made the subject of separate study, historical examination, and comparison: all the facts connected with each have been massed together; and each separate "state" as revealed by magazine or book publication, has been noted, the variants set down, and the results collected in abundant Notes. No results as given by other editions were accepted on their own merits: a critical examination will show a large number of important differences. Poe's poems have been edited so often that one would have supposed there was little room for novelty here; the novelty, how-

ever, of the present edition consists not only in restoring Poe absolutely to himself as he left himself, emended and corrected in the J. Lorimer Graham copy of his poems (once his own), which is the main foundation of our text, but in the *minutiae* of the work, in Dr. Kent's editorial Introduction and in the Notes. Valuable light has been thrown upon some of the poems from Poe's unpublished MSS. in the possession of Mrs. Wm. M. Griswold.

CRITICISM.

In the realm of criticism the present edition may be said to offer a "Poe" altogether "new." It challenges comparison with other editions, in the sure confidence of its belief that never before has the real Poe — the critical Poe — been presented to the public.

Of six volumes of Criticism here presented — Early Criticism, Maturer Criticism, and Later Criticism — fully three and half — nearly four — entire volumes are new. Volumes VIII. and IX. have as their textual basis, the original articles faithfully reproduced from the "Southern Literary Messenger," from May, 1835, to January, 1837 inclusive. Only fragments of these hundreds of pages of new matter have hitherto seen the light of print since their appearance in the thirties; yet they are as interesting as any of Poe's criticisms, showing as they do the formative period of his art and the precocity of his critical genius.

Volumes X. and XI., embracing the Middle Period of Poe's critical activity, from 1837 to 1844, abound in novelties not hitherto reprinted, from "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine," "Graham's," "Godey's," and other sources. To instance Volume XI., by way of

illustration : not only are a large number of the reviews in this volume entirely new, but the old familiar reviews appear with new faces, — that is to say, as Poe left them, with his titles unmutilated, and just as they were printed in the magazines to which they were contributed. Poe's views of Longfellow, Hawthorne, Bulwer, and Griswold, are for the first time "straightened out," presented in the order of their evolution (for they changed from time to time), and *accurately reprinted*. The text is the original article in every case but one — the second Griswold paper, which Mr. W. F. Gill has courteously permitted the editor to reprint from his Biography.

The attribution of unsigned criticisms to Poe in Volumes VIII. and IX. has been based upon the most careful and minute study of all the evidence, external and internal, bearing upon the subject. The discovery of Poe's letter to the Richmond "Compiler," enables the student at once to fix Poe's responsibility for the reviews in the "Southern Literary Messenger," running from December, 1835, to August, 1836.

In this letter he mentions the number of these reviews (between ninety and a hundred), names the subjects of many of them, and describes their style, whether severe or lenient (see Introduction to Volume VIII.). From about May to December, 1835, Poe had been White's editorial assistant on the "Messenger," and mentions by title in his letters to White, Kennedy, and Tucker, a number of these reviews. The reviews themselves, apart from stylistic evidence, contain numerous cross-references to other reviews by the "editor" or the "writer," tending to establish Poe's authorship; the attribution to Poe by Griswold

of the longer and more important notices, establishes beyond a peradventure his authorship of the reviews of Irving, Drake-Halleck, Bird, Walsh, Cockton, etc.; his correspondence mentions as his own those of Simms, Kennedy, Beverley Tucker, Mrs. Sigourney, Anthon; he reproduces, later, in the "Broadway Journal," almost word for word, the reviews of "Philothea" and Drake-Halleck; and in the number for January, 1837 (Poe's final number as editor), he names the six reviews of his authorship in that number.

For Volumes X. and XI. ("Maturer Criticism") a similar chain of evidence exists: first, Griswold's attributions to Poe of the longer and more important reviews disputed now by no one; second, Poe's letter to Burton (see Biography), in which, as in the "Compiler" letter, he exactly recalls and enumerates the number of pages he had contributed to "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine" during his twelve months' connection with it, giving the number of pages for each month; third, the editor's minute and careful study of the columns of "Burton's," with this letter in hand.

When "Burton's Magazine" passed into Graham's hands and combined with "The Casket" to form the newly established "Graham's," in 1840, Poe went along with it as its editor; and here again we have the testimony of Griswold (who succeeded Poe in the editorial chair in 1842), as to Poe's authorship of important reviews, the numerous references to Poe's contributions found in the editorial columns of "Graham's," Graham's own account of Poe's work for him, and the references in Poe's correspondence to his review work.

The volumes of "Later Criticism" (1845–49)

XII. and XIII., are derived from two sources: (1) from the "Broadway Journal;" (2) from "Godey's" and "Graham's" magazines, and from the "Southern Literary Messenger." The volumes of the "Broadway Journal" used and studied for its reviews belonged to Poe himself and have his "P." or his "Poe" in autograph overagainst his contributions; about these, therefore, there can be absolutely no doubt. Poe's later contributions (after 1845) to "Graham's," "Godey's," and the "Southern Literary Messenger" were almost invariably signed with his name whose full commercial value he now thoroughly understood, as also did the magazines: he had become too valuable a factor in the literary world to write anonymously.

Little of Volume XII. has been seen hitherto by the public. After diligent inquiry at all the great libraries, the editor has been able to find but two copies of the rare periodical — the "Broadway Journal" — from which the contents of this volume have been largely drawn; but he has been particularly fortunate in gaining access to a third copy (as mentioned above), once owned by Poe himself, then given by him to Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, and by her to Mr. J. H. Ingram, of London, England. From him it passed to Thomas J. McKee, and was bought by Mr. F. R. Halsey at the McKee sale. It is through Mr. Halsey's kindness that the editor has been able to utilize this copy.

There are persons who may consider the contributions to the "Broadway Journal" as trivial and unimportant, in the light of Poe's more elaborate reviews: but in view of the revival of interest in everything that Poe said, wrote, or did, one may say of his remains as

Symonds said of the Fragments of Sappho — every one of them has a preciousness which the world is loth to lose.

ESSAYS AND MISCELLANIES.

Volumes XIV., XV., XVI. also abound in new features. For example, Poe's well-known papers on "Autography" appeared in two divisions, years apart, the one a hoax, with hoax letters but genuine signatures attached, the other an article reproducing the signatures of the persons discussed, along with Poe's comments on them. The first of these has never before been reprinted, and the second, in mutilated form only, after Griswold. They both appear intact in the present edition, from the original text, the first paper being printed from the "Southern Literary Messenger," as *photographed* by the editor.

Again, the so-called "Cryptography" articles — Poe called them "A Few Words about Secret Writing" — appear in all editions, so far as we know, shorn of the three important "Supplements" and of the more difficult cryptograms which accompany the originals in "Graham's." Our edition reproduces the whole.

The "Palestine," "Stonehenge," "Fitz-Greene Halleck," "Big Abel and Little Manhattan," "Literary Small-Talk," and "Street-Paving," essays, and several of the lengthy considerations of the poetry of Mrs. Frances S. Osgood, Bryant, and others, are new.

The text of "The Literati" is that of "Godey's Lady's Book," May–October, 1846, in which these famous criticisms first appeared. The reader will notice important differences between the present edition and the other editions containing "The Literati,"

due to the fact that, dropping Griswold and all his followers, the present editor has pursued here, as elsewhere, the simple course of going back to "Godey" —to Poe himself—for his text, giving "The Literati of New York City" (for so the series was entitled) in the exact order in which Poe gave the papers, inserting the chronological divisions of the originals where they belong, and reproducing the text accurately. One singular result of this study has been to show that of the original thirty-eight papers printed by Poe, five found in the current editions are *Griswold's substitutes for Poe's original articles.* We have rejected the spurious papers and put Poe's back in their places.

The "Eureka" is an accurate reproduction of Poe's printed text of 1848; but the reader's attention is called to the important body of Notes accompanying the text—Notes for the first time given in their entirety—from Bishop J. F. Hurst's copy of the "Eureka" containing Poe's MS. annotations. Our version of "Eureka" is thus practically new, for it contains not only the printed text exactly as Poe left it, but also *all* the minute MS. notes left by him on the margin of Bishop Hurst's copy; also the "Addenda;" and Poe's unpublished MSS. studies for the essay found in Mrs. W. M. Griswold's MSS.

The fifteen sets of "Marginalia" sent by Poe to "The Southern Literary Messenger," "Graham's," "Godey's," "The Democratic Review," and "The American Museum," have always appeared, hitherto, "edited," mutilated, fragmentary, incomplete. The editor has searched them out in the original magazines, restored the omissions, and placed them in their true chronology. They will doubtless be found different

from other versions of "Marginalia," but the reason is obvious: they could not be otherwise. Poe's short reviews of Bayard Taylor and Wallace, printed under separate titles by Griswold, appeared originally among the "Marginalia," and as "Marginalia" they now reappear.

In view of these statements, the editor does not believe that he has erroneously credited a single review to Poe among the hundreds of pages of hitherto unprinted matter collected in Volumes VIII.–XVI. of the present work.

LETTERS.

Volume XVII. collects for the first time in book form the scattered correspondence that passed between Poe and his contemporaries, relatives, and friends. The great mass of this has been transcribed from the original MSS. in the Griswold Collection of the Boston Public Library.

Along with these letters many others have been introduced from the biographies of Poe by Messrs. Ingram and Gill, with the courteous permission of these gentlemen; from various magazines, newspapers, and periodicals, with the consent of their editors; from scattered volumes of biography; and from unpublished MS. collections of the Poe family in Baltimore and in the South courteously supplied the editor.

It is believed that Volume XVII. will be indispensable to readers, since it contains in epistolary form all the known esoteric part of Poe's life not contained in his autobiographic tales, poems, and criticisms. The real man, at home, abroad, in the intimacy of confession, engaged in the fashioning of his life, speaking from the heart to wife, mother-in-

law, friend, associate, planning for the future, pouring out the eloquence of woe or of happiness, stands before us in these Letters as never before.

Included in the volume are the rare and little known Duyckinck, Snodgrass, Patterson, Ellis, and Poe-English collections of correspondence.

BIOGRAPHY.

The new Biography of Poe in the present volume (I.) has its justification from a variety of points of view. Through inquiry and correspondence with Poe's still surviving contemporaries, new light has been thrown on the poet's early and middle life. Then, too, numerous important articles have appeared in the periodical press since 1884, the date of Professor Woodberry's Life of Poe, and the substance of these appears in this volume.

Poe's autobiographic "Memorandum," found among Dr. R. W. Griswold's papers, is printed from the original MS. through the courtesy of Mrs. Wm. M. Griswold. Its inaccuracies are brought out in an editorial Note.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

The editor has been so generously assisted by scholars interested in his labors that the task of singling out individuals seems invidious; yet he cannot allow the opportunity to pass without placing in the front rank some at least of these co-workers, especially Dr. R. A. Stewart, Dr. C. W. Kent, Mr. Hamilton Wright Mabie, and Mrs. J. A. Harrison, all of whom in their various ways have contributed most essentially to this work.

Next to these come the names of authors of lives

or memorials of Poe who have generously permitted extracts from their works to be used in this edition: Messrs. J. H. Ingram, W. Fearing Gill, R. H. Stoddard, E. L. Didier, James Grant Wilson, and Miss S. S. Rice. Detailed acknowledgments to these authors will be found in their proper places.

To Miss Amelia F. Poe, Mrs. Wm. M. Griswold, Mr. F. R. Halsey, Mr. R. L. Traylor, Dr. B. B. Minor, Mrs. S. A. Weiss, Prof. E. B. Setzler, and Bishop J. F. Hurst most cordial thanks are given for the loan of invaluable MSS. or illustrative material, or for contributions to the work duly acknowledged in the various volumes. But for the coöperation of Miss Poe, Mrs. Griswold, Mr. Halsey and Mr. Traylor, this edition could not have included much new, important, and unused material.

An enterprise so large as this has necessarily involved collaboration with many editorial assistants: the Editor would therefore thankfully acknowledge the intelligent assistance rendered by Messrs. William Adams Slade, J. P. Kennedy, G. W. Powers, J. Walker McSpadden, N. H. Dole, Miss Kate Stephens, Miss Charlotte Porter, Miss Adèle M. Smith, and Miss A. O'Gorman.

Of the many public institutions that have contributed of their wealth to these pages, the editor would particularly name and thank the authorities of the Boston Public Library, the Brown University Library, the New York Public Library, the Philadelphia Public Library, the New York Historical Library, the Drexel Institute, the Hallowell Library (Maine), and the Library of Congress.

Much valuable material in the present work is due to the courtesy of the editors of the "New York

Herald," the "Baltimore American," the "Richmond [Va.] Standard," "The Independent," and "The Methodist Review."

The Century Association of New York and the Caxton Club of Chicago have been exceedingly generous in permitting access to their stores of Poe material: Poe's letters and Poe's annotated copies of his own works.

Thanks are also due to the "Century Magazine," Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, Harper & Brothers, D. Appleton & Co., Houghton, Mifflin & Co., and Herbert S. Stone & Co. (the last for permission to quote from their edition of Poe's Works published in 10 volumes).

The names of Dr. William Hand Browne, Mr. Charles Poindexter, Col. T. H. Ellis, Bishop Fitzgerald, Mrs. L. G. Mayo, Mr. Glenn, Dr. B. W. Green, Mr. J. B. Green, Mrs. W. Y. Dill, Mr. C. Hutchinson, Prof. G. E. Woodberry, Prof. C. F. Richardson, Mr. Herbert Senter (librarian of the Century Association), Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, Mr. F. W. Page, and Mr. Dix (editor of "The Home Journal"), are appreciatively mentioned elsewhere. The editor would in this place return them all, but especially to Mr. W. C. Ford, Mr. H. L. Koopman, Dr. J. S. Billings, Mr. John Thomson, and Dr. MacAlister, his earnest thanks for the interest and coöperation which they have so abundantly displayed.

Valuable illustrations or other materials are due to Miss Poe, Mr. W. R. Benjamin, Mr. C. H. Quarles, Capt. Dimmock, Mr. Daniel Bendann, the New York Historical Society, Miss C. F. Dailey, the Chevalier E. R. Reynolds, Dr. A. Crawford, Mr. R. L. Traylor, Prof. W. Le Conte Stevens, and Mr. M. P. Tilley.

It is finally due to the enlightened coöperation of the publishers that this large task has been brought successfully to an end; a task which, needless to say, would have remained unaccomplished but for their constant encouragement.

JAMES A. HARRISON.

March 25, 1902.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

BIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

1809–1824.

POE'S ANCESTRY, BIRTH, AND EARLIER YEARS AT RICHMOND: SCHOOL-DAYS IN ENGLAND AND VIRGINIA.

I.

When he was five-and-twenty years old Edgar Allan Poe wrote the following letter to his life-long friend Kennedy, author of "Swallow Barn," "Horseshoe Robinson," etc., and afterwards Secretary of the Navy under President Fillmore, in 1852:

Baltimore, November, 1834.

Dear Sir: I have a favor to beg of you which I thought it best to ask in writing, because, sincerely, I had not courage to ask it in person. I am indeed too well aware that I have no claim whatever to your attention, and that even the manner of my introduction to your notice was at the best equivocal. Since the day you first saw me, my situation in life has altered materially. At that time I looked forward to the inheritance of a large fortune, and, in the meantime, was in receipt of an annuity for my support. This was allowed me by a gentleman of Virginia (Mr. Jno. Allan) who adopted me at

the age of two years (both my parents being dead), and who, until lately, always treated me with the affection of a father. But a second marriage on his part, and I dare say many follies on my own, at length ended in a quarrel between us. He is now dead, and has left me nothing. I am thrown entirely upon my own resources, with no profession and very few friends. Worse than all this, I am at length penniless. Indeed no circumstances less urgent would have induced me to risk your friendship by troubling you with my distresses. But I could not help thinking that if my situation was stated — as you could state it — to Carey & Lea,[1] they might be led to aid me with a small sum in consideration of my MS. now in their hands. This would relieve my immediate wants, and I could then look forward more confidently to better days. At all events receive the assurance of my gratitude for what you have already done.

Most respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

This letter is an epitome in brief of Poe's whole career, containing as it does indubitable data as to his early life, intimations of his marvellous precocity (second only to that of Shelley, Heine, Keats, or Hugo), and indications of the long-lasting misery in which his short life (also like that of Shelley and Keats) was to be spent.

Poe, the poet Virginian, as he loved to call himself — "I am a Virginian, — at least I call myself one, for I have resided all my life, until within the last few years, in Richmond," he says to his friend F. W. Thomas — was born in Boston, January 19, 1809.

[1] In a note Mr. Kennedy explains: "This refers to the volume of Tales sent to Carey & Lea — 'Tales of the Arabesque,' etc., — being two series submitted for the prize, for which one was chosen, and two others at my suggestion sent to Carey & Lea." — J. P. K.

He was not "born in Baltimore, in January, 1811,"[1] as Griswold's memoir puts it, — perhaps following a wrong date given by Poe himself, — repeating the statement in "Prose Writers of America" (second edition: Philadelphia, Carey & Hart, 1847); an error enlarged unintentionally by James Russell Lowell in the February number of *Graham's Magazine*, 1845, who says that "Mr. Poe was then [1845] about thirty-two years of age" and "still in the prime of life." In his later years Poe either could not or would not tell the truth about his age.

The fact is however undeniable that Poe was born in Boston, disagreeable as the fact was to him all through his life, and that his first volume — the famous "Tamerlane and Other Poems," of 1827 — bore on its titlepage, "By a Bostonian," in capital letters.

With the peculiar perversity with which children sometimes rail at their mothers, however, Poe perpetually railed at Boston and treated her as the unfortunate *noverca* of the Roman plays; and Boston in return has avenged herself on her wayward child by bringing railing accusations against him and supplying for him an endless chain of embittered biographers.

The biographers of Poe are indebted to Mr. John H. Ingram[2] for the surest testimony, obtained from the poet's family in Baltimore, as to his ancestry.

"There is no good reason," says John P. Poe, Esq., of Baltimore, "to suppose that the ancestors of

[1] Edgar A. Poe's Miscellaneous Works, Redfield, New York, 1849, p. xxiii.

[2] Edgar Allan Poe: His Life, Letters, and Opinions: By John H. Ingram: London, 1880: John Hogg: 2 vols.: p. 245, Vol. II., W. F. Gill (London, 1878), pp. 9–20.

Edgar A. Poe were descended from the Le Poers [the Anglo-Norman family who passed from Italy to France, and from France to England, Wales, and Ireland, and with whom Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, the poet's *fiancée* in 1848 connected her own and Poe's progenitors]. John Poe, the progenitor of the family in America, emigrated from the north of Ireland a number of years before the Revolution, and purchased a farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, whence he afterwards removed to Cecil County, Maryland. At the time of the Revolution he was residing at Baltimore. His wife was Jane McBride, believed to be a sister [not a daughter, as frequently stated] of James McBride, Admiral of the Blue, and M. P. for Plymouth in 1785."

Mrs. Clemm, Poe's aunt and mother-in-law, says, "My father was born in Ireland, but his parents left there when he was only six weeks old, and he was so patriotic that he never would acknowledge he was any other than an American. He lived in Baltimore from the time of the Revolution; he took my mother there from Pennsylvania, a bride." [1]

General David Poe, the poet's grandfather, was a distinguished veteran of the American Revolution, a devoted friend of Lafayette (for whose ragged troops in 1781 Mrs. Poe personally cut out and superintended the manufacture of five hundred garments), and quartermaster-general of the American forces in Baltimore.

David, the eldest son of General Poe, was the poet's father.

Beverley Tucker, the well-known contributor to *The Southern Literary Messenger* and author of "The

[1] Ingram, Vol. II., p. 249 *n*.

Partizan Leader," wrote in 1835 that he "remembered Poe's beautiful mother when a girl."

This beautiful girl had elements of the sprite about her, being a "girl without a country," born in mid-ocean while her English mother was journeying across the Atlantic from England to America, and she possessed rare talents for singing, dancing, and acting. No one can look at the portrait of Elizabeth Arnold (for such was her maiden name) without seeing in it foreshadowings of those ethereal Eleonoras and Ligeias that haunted the poet's dreams with their delicate impalpabilities, their Indian-summer-like vagueness: the childlike figure, the great, wide open, mysterious eyes, the abundant curling hair confined in the quaint bonnet of a hundred years ago and shadowing the brow in raven masses, the high waist and attenuated arms clasped in an Empire robe of faint, flowered design, the tiny but rounded neck and shoulders, the head proudly erect. It is the face of an elf, a sprite, an Undine who was to be the mother of the most elfish, the most unearthly of poets, whose luminous dark-gray eyes had a glint of the supernatural in them and reflected, as he says in one of his earliest poems, "the wilder'd" nature of the man.

Rich currents of Irish, Scotch, English, and American blood ran together in his palpitating veins and produced a psychic blend unlike that of any other American poet: Celtic mysticism, Irish fervor, Scotch melody, the iris-tipped fantasy of the Shelleys and the Coleridges, and the independence and alertness of the transatlantic American into whom all the Old-World characteristics had been born, on whom all these treasures of music and imagination, of passion and mystery had been bestowed by some fairy godmother.

Elizabeth Arnold was a widow when she married David Poe, Jr., in 1805, her first husband having been the light comedian C. D. Hopkins. He died in October, 1805, and the Poe marriage followed shortly after. Mr. George E. Woodberry, in his painstaking biography,[1] traces out the Bohemian wanderings of grandmother Arnold, Elizabeth Arnold, Mrs. Hopkins, David Poe, and Elizabeth Arnold Poe, from Maine to Charleston and from New York and Boston to Richmond, Washington, Norfolk, and Petersburg, where the gay little company (sad enough at times) performed all sorts of pieces in which the arch, roguish, Ariel-like nature of Mrs. Poe drew the attention of critics, and in which her great versatility now enabled her to impersonate tender Ophelias and Cordelias, Palmyras and Sigismundas, now to sing and dance Polish minuets to David Poe's reels and horn-pipes.

Mr. Woodberry has killed the elopement slander: there was no elopement; and David Poe was simply a wayward, handsome, theatre-loving young gallant of twenty-five who joined the Hopkins Company in 1804, and became a strolling player like Will Shakspere and Jean Poquelin Molière, giving up forever his law-books and his uncle's home in Augusta, Georgia, in favor of the boards.

After their marriage the two became "Virginia Comedians," and the career of the couple may be traced in the various gazettes and periodicals of the time, especially in the so-called "elegant literature" of the period.

At length a stop — in Boston — came to the wanderings: January 19, 1809, Mrs. Poe did not appear — but Edgar did!

[1] Edgar Allan Poe: American Men of Letters, pp. 1–14.

Three weeks after, the poor little woman — whose great eyes look out on us so wistfully from the miniature so passionately beloved by her son — was singing and dancing again merrily before the Boston boards, — with that merriment that must have been nigh to heart-break, for she was now the mother of two little sons, William Henry Leonard and Edgar (followed two years later by Rosalie Poe), with no steady or reliable means of support, and her husband probably already attacked by consumption. All her life the mother engaged in a life-and-death struggle with poverty and penury, like her gifted son: all their lives mother and son were entangled in that vast Disaster which came to such thrilling expression in "The Raven," sinking in "desperate seas" of misery and succumbing at last to the storm and stress of life, the one in Richmond, the other in Baltimore.

"For my little son Edgar, who should ever love Boston, the place of his birth, and where his mother found her best and most sympathetic friends": such are the words[1] written in delicate caligraphy by the mother on the back of a little picture which she painted and bequeathed to her son; words, however, written before the final tragedy, a fore-knowledge of which would perhaps have substituted Richmond for Boston, and the lifelong Virginia friends for the casual Boston theatre acquaintances.

It is singular that some of these Boston friends had the names of *Usher* and *Wilson*, names afterwards so celebrated in the tales of the author.

The year 1811 found the players in Richmond, Virginia, — if, indeed, David Poe was at this time living, which is at least doubtful. Little Rosalie (who

[1] Ingram, I., 6.

lived until 1874 and died in the Epiphany Church Home at Washington, D. C., an object of charity) came after her father's death to add to the troubles and distresses of the mother.

The two short years which Edgar Poe had already lived had been signalized by some remarkable things: the year of his birth was indeed an Annus Mirabilis. His favorite poets, Elizabeth Barrett Barrett (to whom, as "the noblest of her sex" he dedicated "The Raven and Other Poems" in 1845) and Alfred Tennyson ("the greatest poet that ever lived") were born in that year; Charles Darwin, who revolutionized science, and Chopin and Mendelssohn, the great musicians; Abraham Lincoln, the great Southern emancipator; Gladstone, the famous orator; Fanny Kemble, the subtle interpreter of Shakspere; Oliver Wendell Holmes, the wit and poet, — formed an illustrious galaxy of new-born children-contemporaries of Poe, making the year 1809, when Madison was president, Metternich prime minister of Austria, and the Battle of Wagram was fought, a starred year in the historic calendar.

No tragedy in later times is more fraught with infinite pathos than the sufferings and death of the Poes in 1811. Travelling in those days was exceedingly difficult and dangerous, accompanied by all the inconveniences, not to say horrors, of the old "Continental" stage-coach system, terrible roads, and interminable distances. From 1805, when their marriage took place, the Poes incessantly travelled — from Boston to New York, from New York to Philadelphia, Washington, far South to distant Charleston, Norfolk, Richmond, back to New York again, flitting like wandering birds from bough to bough, in hopes of an

engagement, rolling over the country in the wretched vehicles of the time, encumbered with theatrical baggage and two forlorn little babes (sometimes left with Baltimore relatives).

With the mighty will of Ligeia, which in more than one trait appears to be the life of Poe's mother wrought into a strange and tender story, the delicate woman moves in her appointed task, determined to support herself and her children, until she reached Richmond, Virginia, in August, 1811. All these years it had been romantic and sentimental drama, song, dance, light comedy; Mrs. Poe had represented nymphs and Ariels and cupids, distressed Ophelias and Shaksperian Desdemonas. Now, — it was tragedy, pure and simple — starvation — death.

After Rosalie's birth the mother fell into a swift decline, beginning to waste and fade like a waxen taper before the inward burnings of consumption. Never surrendering or giving up hope, she went on announcing and acting until the destitution of the family attracted somehow the charitable attention of the Richmond ladies: benefits were arranged by the kind-hearted players; and at last the following card appeared in the *Enquirer* for November 29, 1811: [1]

"TO THE HUMANE HEART.

"On this night Mrs. Poe, lingering on the bed of disease and surrounded by her children, asks your assistance, and asks it, perhaps, for the last time. The generosity of a Richmond audience can need no other appeal. — For particulars see the bills of the day."

[1] The author is indebted to Dr. Wm. Hand Browne for these clippings, which are accurately reprinted.

A few days later, on a date very near the happy and blessed Christmas time, the time of supremely happy mothers and loving children, the curtain rose for the last time on the final act of the tragedy of David Poe and Elizabeth Arnold :

"DECEMBER 10, 1811.

"*Died*, on last Sunday morning, Mrs. Poe, one of the actresses of the company at present playing on the Richmond boards. By the death of this lady the stage has been deprived of one of its chief ornaments ; and to say the least of her, she was an interesting actress, and never failed to catch the applause and command the admiration of the beholder." — *Enquirer*, December 10, 1811.

If, as Mr. Gill asserts,[1] the father died three days later of the same dread disease, the cup of suffering must have overflowed and the orphaned children been desolate indeed. The Gill Biography further contains an unsupported statement (Appendix, 319) that "Mr. Allan and Mr. Mackenzie, both wealthy and benevolent Scotch gentlemen, having been informed that the Poes were in great distress, sought them out to afford them relief. They were found in wretched lodgings, lying upon a straw-bed, and very sick, Mr. Poe with consumption, and his wife with pneumonia. There was no food in the house. They had no money or fuel, and their clothes had been pawned or sold.

"Two little children were with the parents, in the care of an old Welsh woman who had come over from England with Mrs. Poe, and who was understood to be her mother. The children were half-clad, half-

[1] Life of Edgar A. Poe, p. 20 ; Chatto & Windus : 1878.

starved, and very much emaciated. The youngest was in a stupor, caused by feeding on bread steeped in gin. The old woman acknowledged that she was in the habit of so feeding them, 'to keep them quiet and make them strong.'"

This account has only too many touches of verisimilitude in it.

And the author adds: "Mr. Mackenzie, shocked at this spectacle, took the children to his own house, where they were tenderly cared for. A few days wrought a great change in their appearance, and the beauty and intelligence of little Edgar became a subject of universal comment. William Henry, the elder brother, had already been sent to his grandfather [General Poe] in Baltimore."

Two weeks and two days later, after Mrs. Poe had been laid to rest in a now unknown grave in one of the beautiful Richmond cemeteries, the Broad Street Theatre where Mr. Placide's gay little company of Virginia Comedians had so merrily pranced and capered, was consumed in the awful conflagration of Christmas Eve, 1811, in which the governor of Virginia and sixty other persons of high social distinction perished; and from its ashes rose the Monumental Church in memory of the tragic event.

The extinction and fall of The House of Usher could not have been more sudden and terrible:

"Lo! 'tis a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years:
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres."

Can the exquisite yet awful imagery of this poem, full as it is of theatre memories, — mimes, puppets, shifting scenery, funereal curtains, phantom forms, — have twined itself somehow about the memory of his mother in connection with the burning of the Richmond Theatre, about which all Virginia never ceased to talk for half a century, and which sent a thrill of horror all over the United States? Little Edgar must often have heard it discussed, and must have watched the memorial church as it slowly rose out of the grave of the theatre where his mother had charmed the Richmond audiences with her beauty and grace so many times long before.[1]

It is asserted that only an accident kept the Allans from the theatre that evening.

II.

Richmond, Virginia, is one of the most beautiful places in the old Commonwealth renowned for beautiful sites. Founded more than one hundred and fifty years ago, it got its name from the lovely old English village of Richmond above London near which Cardinal Wolsey had built lordly Hampton Court, with Pope's Twickenham near by, Stoke Pogis Church and its immortal Elegy in the distance, and Horace Walpole's villa and the glimmering Thames throwing their clustering associations into the picture.

At Richmond it was (and is) delightful to live, and here, in 1811, having been adopted by Mr. John Allan, an Ayrshire Scotchman from the land of

[1] There was even a long-lasting tradition that the Poes had been burned alive in the theatre.

PORTRAIT OF JOHN ALLAN.

From a silhouette.

Burns, Edgar Allan Poe took up his abode, a two-year-old child, precociously clever and beautiful. During his most impressionable years, the city was the most intellectual and — with the exception of New Orleans — the gayest city of the South. It was full of old families that had furnished statesmen, legislators, governors, generals, and Congressmen to the United States; the presidents of the United States frequently resorted there in family reunions and on social visits; distinguished foreigners like Lafayette, after visiting Mount Vernon and Monticello and Montpelier, drifted naturally to the hospitable metropolis of the oldest of the states and were royally entertained with the far-famed Old Virginia profusion.

Little Edgar's childhood and youth were passed in an atmosphere of sociability, open-air sports, oratory, and elocution. Patrick Henry, the great orator of the Revolution, lay in the neighboring churchyard of Old St. John's; Chief-Justice Marshall, the greatest of the justices of the Supreme Court, and John Randoph of Roanoke, celebrated for silver voice and stinging sarcasm, were familiar figures in Richmond streets; retired presidents like Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, after they had laid off the robes of office mingled with democratic simplicity in the cultured throngs that haunted the parlors of Capitol Square and Shockoe Hill, or of the suburban homes where the neighboring plantations projected far into the edges of the city. Almost within hailing distance were the pleasant mansions of the Pages (ancestors of Thomas Nelson Page), Wickhams, Cockes, Harrisons, Mayos, and others socially and politically famed in the fashionable annals of the times, and in the city itself were gathered a goodly company of social celebrities.

Richmond has for a century been famous for its schools, classical and denominational, at first taught by English or Irish graduates of famous transatlantic schools, and later by distinguished masters of arts of the University of Virginia.

Rosalie Poe was adopted by the Mackenzies, who kept a well-known ladies' school still remembered by persons of the older generation and "old gentlemen of the black stock." Edgar fell into the hands of kindly folk who taught him at the age of five or six to read, write, draw, paint, and "spout verse" from his adopted father's dining-table, intermingling the recitations (it is asserted, but only on hearsay evidence) with toasts and potations to the guests. — It seems at least impossible at this date to believe that a hard, stern Scotchman such as Mr. Allan is described to have been, should for the amusement of an evening, so far forget himself and his responsibilities to the poor little waif as deliberately to ruin his constitution and his morals with practices so offensive, alike to decency and common-sense. As an educated Scot, he must have known the history and fortunes of Burns, his Ayrshire fellow-countryman, and must have noted, if he had his eyes open at all, the resemblance between the temperaments of the poet-ploughman and the players' son.

Much mythical nonsense has been talked and written about the "wealth" of Mr. Allan when he adopted Poe, and about the "luxury" in which the boy was reared in the "palatial home of the Allans." The fact is, Mr. Allan was a poor man when he adopted Poe and lived upstairs over his store.

A correspondent, in a letter dated December 17, 1900, writes:

"Because the Allans for some half century were known in Richmond as rich people, all the books assume forsooth that Poe's youth was spoiled by indulgence of luxury and extravagance such as large wealth may command. It may have been, and doubtless was, somewhat spoiled as the adopted child of a good, loving woman, childless herself, but wealth was an unknown factor in that household until the windfall of the Galt legacy in 1825, just before Poe left for the University. That the Allans in 1811, when they adopted Poe, were living upstairs over their store, in which John Allan carried on a small trade, is a fact not discreditable, but inconsistent with wealth, and a great contrast with their later condition. The fact of this mode of business and living rests as yet on traditionary information, of which I have not yet found record proof: but I have no doubt of its correctness.

"The end of the War of 1815 reopened commercial relations with England, presenting fine chances for business enterprise, of which the 'Scotch factor' was not slow to take advantage. That the results were unprofitable and disastrous is evidenced by a deed of assignment in 1822, two years after his return to Richmond. The assignment was made on private account and as partner of Ellis and Allan of Richmond, and Allan and Ellis of London.

"The schedule includes household furniture, his negroes, etc., and interest in a small farm inherited by his wife: from which it would seem that he had no realty in his own right. By consent of creditors Allan was allowed to remain in possession of the property until the Trustee be required to sell; with agreement to release if he could settle with creditors. The Deed of Release is not found, and it is probable that he was

under stress of the misfortune until relieved by the Galt legacy. . . . Old Mr. Galt was one of the wealthiest men in the state, and John Allan's share of that wealth (he was Galt's nephew) made him one of the richest men in a town that had comparatively few large fortunes. The fortune revolutionized the Allan family life, and gave them new position.

"The Galt Will was probated in March, 1825, and the city records show that within three months the legatee, with his newly acquired wealth, bought the house on Main Street, afterwards known as the Allan House.

"Poe's stay in that house was not more than about six months, before leaving for the University, and for short periods after return therefrom. — I wonder sometimes how much the sensibilities of the new-rich man may have been offended by satirical comment of the bright youngster who — the critics to the contrary notwithstanding — *bad* keen sense of the humorous, and wonderful talent in all sorts of criticism [witness Dr. Ambler's account of his satire upon the members of a debating society to which he belonged, *aetat.* 14; Ingram, I., 30]. I doubt not that some such criticism, not malicious, was one of the ingredients in their subsequent disagreement and quarrel.

"I do not believe that dissipation, and a quarrel about money matters were the real cause of Poe's leaving Richmond and his self-effacement for two years in the army. Doubtless, after return from the University, there was some such quarrel and falling out, but they do not adequately explain the situation and its results, for which there are far better — and natural — reasons."

This then at once disposes of the myth of "mil-

lionaire" Allan, — certainly not to the discredit of the canny Scot who was persuaded by his excellent wife — a Miss Valentine of Richmond — much against his will, it seems, to adopt the boy.

In June, 1815, — the day before the Battle of Waterloo, — Mr. Allan, his wife, and his wife's sister, and Edgar sailed for England on this business venture, possibly for a short stay, but, as it turned out, for an entire lustrum of five years.

Thus early into Edgar's most impressionable life a slice of Old England, his mother-land, intruded; a bit of Old-World romance beset his infant imagination at its most sensitive period; the spell of Europe, in the time of Waterloo and the great Napoleon, wove itself subtly over his fancy, and he doubtless drank deep of the poetic and semi-mysterious atmosphere of the quaint English town where his foster-father left him — Stoke-Newington, then a suburb of London.

We shall here embellish our narrative with a picturesque quotation from Woodberry's Life (p. 16):

"His residence there [Stoke-Newington] seems to have left deep marks of remembrance upon his mind, nor is it unlikely that the delight in the ancient, which afterwards characterized him, sprang partly from this early familiarity with a memorable past not yet vanished from the eye and hand. The main village, which has since been lost in the overflow of the metropolis, then consisted of a long elm-embowered street of the Tudor time, following the track of a Roman road; near the old Green, by deeply-shaded walks, that still bear the names of Henry and Elizabeth, stood the houses of Anne Boleyn's ill-fated lover, Earl Percy, and of her daughter's fortunate courtier, the favorite Leicester; to the west ran the green lanes, over hazy

inland fields, and to the east the more modern street of Queen Anne and early Georgian architecture, where behind its formal box-bordered parterre rose the white Manor House School, old and irregular, sloping in the rear to the high brick wall, with its ponderous spiked and iron-studded gates, which enclosed the playground.

"In the seclusion of these grounds Poe spent his school-days from his eighth [?] to his thirteenth year; there in the long, narrow, low school-room, oak-ceiled, gothic-windowed, with its irregular, black, jackknife-hewed desks and the sacred corner-boxes for master and ushers (in one of them once sat the murderer, Eugene Aram), he conned his Latin and mispronounced his French; in the bed-room beyond the many tortuous passages and perplexing little stairways, he first felt the wakening of the conscience, whose self-echoing whispers he afterwards heightened into the voice and ghostly terror of the Spanish *Hombre Embozado;* in that wide, gravelled, treeless, and benchless playground he trained his muscles in the sports, and when on Saturday afternoon the mighty gate swung open he and his mates filed out to walk beneath the gigantic and gnarled trees amid which once lived Shakespeare's friend Essex, or to gaze with a boy's eyes of wonder at the thick walls, deep windows and doors, massive with locks and bars, behind which Robinson Crusoe was written; and on Sunday, after the holiday ramble, he would obey the summons of the hollow-toned church-bell, sounding from its fretted tower."

In this Old-World town, therefore, with its meandering lanes and elm-embowered pleasaunces, Edgar Poe was placed by the Allans, and there he was for

the first time regularly trained in English, Latin, mathematics, and French. All about him were associations of a venerable antiquity; boys of genius like himself though older — Byron, Shelley, Keats — were beginning in these memorable five or six years to utter the first musical pipings of the most musically gifted of English poets, all of them living then at no great distance from Stoke-Newington; England was in the flush and exultation of the Waterloo period, after the shame and humiliation of the Battle of New Orleans fought just six months before. The boy could not but have been impressed by the stir and glory of the time.

Dr. Bransby, his teacher, and the ancient Manor House School, imbedded themselves so deeply in his ductile memory that they were enshrined later in his "William Wilson," which in one of his letters he calls his best story. The broad, benignant face of the doctor smiled complacently out of a huge wig that made him look like a lord chancellor; his ready erudition revelled in quotations from Horace and Shakspere (spoken of by Poe with so deep a reverence in the Letter prefixed to the 1831 edition of his Poems), and he remembered his little American pupil well enough to speak in after years kindly of his aptitude while criticising his over-abundant pocket-money.

Poe's English education, thus so favorably begun in England under a learned ecclesiastic, never ceased to be conducted by Englishmen or Irishmen, for after he returned with the Allans to Richmond in 1820, he was successively coached by Messrs. Clarke and Burke at their classical academies, and when he went to the University of Virginia in 1826, all the professors with two exceptions were accomplished Englishmen. Even

as a boy Poe was placed by Col. J. T. L. Preston (a friend of the present writer) on a level with "Nat" Howard, afterwards known as one of the most distinguished Latinists in the South, and a school-boy contemporary, at Clarke's, of Poe.

"To dream," cries Poe in an autobiographic passage in "The Assignation," — "to dream has been the business of my life. I have therefore framed for myself as you see, a bower of dreams."

This "bower of dreams" doubtless began its aërial architecture among the immemorial elms, the misty fragrances and shadows, the poetic reveries, the trance-like tranquillities of this time when the English school-boy, ten or twelve years old, had already begun to scribble the little volume which he handed to Mr. Allan, and to be haunted by rhythmic fancies and tantalizing poetic thirsts.

Nor will the conscientious biographer overlook what must have been the curious psychological effects of the sea on Poe's sensitive temperament during the long-drawn-out ocean voyages of eighty years ago, when a month was a quick passage across the gray Atlantic, and the precocious child, first at six, then at twelve or thirteen, spent a month or two of existence amid the midsummer splendors of the June seas. No one has depicted wind in all its myriad and magic shapes and forms and sensations, or water in its infinite diversities of color and motion, more graphically than the author of "Arthur Gordon Pym," "A MS. found in a Bottle," and "The Fall of the House of Usher," whether the one is gently agitating the whispering curtains of the Lady Rowena's bed-chamber or the other is swallowing in its mystic embrace the crumbling battlements of the last of the Ushers. The Eolian

petulance of the poet's fancy, the Shelleyan versatility of phrase and rhythm with which he portrays wind and water, storm and calm, tarn and lake, interpreting the thousand-fold mysteries of the air and unlocking thrills of suggestion and horror from its chambered recesses, must all at least have started to germinate in these lengthened boyish ocean travels. Both times he crossed the Atlantic in June when the glory of the stars would be revealed in all their midsummer beauty, and when "Astarte's bediamonded crescent" and the starry hieroglyphs of heaven would stain themselves on the heavens in pigments of fire, ever to be treasured up in "Al Aaraaf" and many another star-poem or star allusion. The "MS. found in a Bottle" is a water-poem from beginning to end, written at an early age when the youth was vividly reminiscent of actual experience. The zephyrlike gossamer women of the Tales are incarnations of whispering winds; their movements are the breezy undulations of air travelling over bending grain; their melodious voices are the lyrics of the wind articulating themselves in flutelike throats; and full of passion and pregnancy of meaning are the musical inflections that exhale from their lips as perfumes exhale from the chalices of flowers.

In 1820 we find the travellers again at home in their beloved Virginia, beloved by Poe for many reasons, and in later days because it bore the name of his idolized wife.

Col. Thomas Mann Randolph, son-in-law of the illustrious Jefferson, was Governor of Virginia when the family returned home; a wave of prosperity had passed over the country since the Battle of New Orleans and the Battle of Waterloo; Napoleon was

dying at St. Helena; and the Bourbon Restoration had sent a thrill of joy through aristocratic France: the world seemed to rest. The firm of Ellis and Allan, dealing in the famous "Virginia leaf" now rejoicing in a world-wide reputation, was beginning to look up, though there is no evidence for the assertion that it had acquired great fortune at this time; prosperous it had been, as we see from the following sketch of Poe's boyhood furnished the writer by the late Col. T. H. Ellis, son of the senior member of the firm.[1] This final statement of Colonel Ellis will correct several mistakes of the biographies, which assert that Mr. Allan went abroad to settle an estate, etc. It gives also an authentic reference to the place and time of David Poe's death: "her husband had died not long before, in Norfolk;" and shows that the names "Edgar Allan" and "Rose Mackenzie" were the baptismal names of the two younger children.

"On the 8th of December, 1811, Mrs. Poe, of English birth, one of the actresses of the company then playing on the Richmond boards, died in Richmond, leaving three children. Her husband had died not long before, in Norfolk. She had made herself a favorite with those who were in the habit of attending the theatre, which was then the fashionable entertainment with educated people, both in this country and England. There was general sympathy for the little orphans left by her. The eldest of the three, William Henry, was adopted by his grandfather, Mr. Poe, of Baltimore, a gentleman of social position there, and of family pride, who had been much offended by his son's

[1] Here reprinted by the courtesy of the editor of the New York *Independent*, in which the account first appeared, September, 1900.

marriage with an actress. This child died young, but lived long enough to develop rare promise. The second child, born January 19, 1809, was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. John Allan, of Richmond; the youngest, a daughter, was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. William Mackenzie, also of Richmond; and the names Edgar Allan and Rose Mackenzie were given in baptism by the Rev. John Buchanan, D.D., at the residence of Mr. John Richard, who was a friend of all the parties concerned.

"The death of Mrs. Poe occurred eighteen days before the burning of the Richmond Theatre, and it is not improbable that Mr. and Mrs. Allan would have been present on that occasion but for the circumstance that they were spending the Christmas holidays at Mr. Boller Cocke's, at Turkey Island, with Edgar. Mr. Allan and my father were partners in business. They had been raised together as clerks in the store of Mr. William Galt, who was the most successful merchant of his day in Virginia. The business of Ellis and Allan, beginning in 1800, so prospered that after the war of 1812–15 they determined to establish a branch house in London, for which purpose Mr. Allan went abroad and remained in England five years. He was accompanied by his wife (a cousin of my mother), by his sister-in-law, Miss Anne M. Valentine, and by his adopted son. On their return, his own house having been leased, so that he could not get possession of it, Mr. Allan and his family became members of my father's family, and lived with us, I suppose, nearly a year. It was then and there that my recollections of Edgar A. Poe began.

"He was very beautiful, yet brave and manly for one so young. No boy ever had a greater influence

over me than he had. He was, indeed, a leader among his playmates; but my admiration for him scarcely knew bounds. The consequence was, he led me to do many a forbidden thing, for which I was duly punished. The only whipping I ever knew Mr. Allan to give him was for carrying me into the fields and woods beyond 'Belvidere,' adjacent to what is now Hollywood Cemetery, one Saturday, and keeping me there all day and until after dark, without anybody at home knowing where we were; and for shooting a lot of domestic fowls, belonging to the proprietor of 'Belvidere,' who was at that time, I think, Judge Bushrod Washington. He taught me to shoot, to swim, to skate, to play bandy; and I ought to mention that he once saved me from drowning — for having thrown me into the falls headlong, that I might 'strike out' for myself, he presently found it necessary to come to my help or it would have been too late! Mr. and Mrs. Allan, having no children of their own, lavished upon him their whole affection; he was sent to the best schools, he was taught every accomplishment that a boy could acquire, he was trained to all the habits of the most polished society. There was not a brighter, more graceful or more attractive boy in the city than Edgar Allan Poe. Talent for declamation was one of his gifts. I well remember a public exhibition at the close of a course of instruction in elocution which he had attended, and my delight when, in the presence of a large and distinguished company, he bore off the prize in competition with Channing Moore, Cary Wickham, Andrew Johnston, Nat Howard, and others who were regarded as among the most promising of the Richmond boys.

"Not content with an adopted son, Mr. and Mrs. Allan desired to adopt a daughter also, and were constantly begging for my sister, now Mrs. Beverley Tucker. The intimacy between the two families — my father's and Mr. Allan's — was naturally very close; on one side — I mean the side of the Ellis boys and girls — our largest Christmas gifts, birthday presents, etc., came from the Allans. Edgar was once guilty of a piece of meanness for which I have not forgiven him to this day. With our father and mother we had gone down to spend Christmas evening with the Allans. Among the toys provided for our entertainment was a snake — a long, slim, shiny thing made in sections, which were fastened to each other by wires, and a boy, by taking hold of the tail and holding it out from his body, could make it wriggle and dart about in the most lifelike manner. This hideous imitation of a serpent Edgar took in his hand, and kept poking it at my sister Jane until it almost ran her crazy.

"Of course I knew about his swim of seven miles in James River down to Warwick, accompanied by Robert G. Cabell, Robert C. Stanard, and perhaps two or three other schoolboys, with Mr. William Burke, their schoolmaster, who went along in a row-boat to rescue him in case his strength should fail. I knew also of his Thespian performances, when he and William F. Ritchie and James Greenhow and Creed Thomas and Richard Cary Ambler and other schoolmates appeared in dramatic character under a tent erected on a vacant lot one or two squares beyond what is now St. James' Church on Fifth Street — admittance fee, one cent! But never was I prouder of him than when, dressed in the uniform of the

'Junior Morgan Riflemen' (a volunteer company composed of boys, and which General Lafayette, in his memorable visit to Richmond, selected as his bodyguard), he walked up and down in front of the marquee erected on the Capitol Square, under which the old general held a grand reception in October, 1824.

"One evening there was a meeting of the Gentlemen's Whist Club at my father's house. The members and a few invited guests had assembled and were seated at whist tables set out all over the large parlor, and things were as quiet as they were on a certain 'night before Christmas,' of which we have read, when a ghost appeared! The ghost, no doubt, expected and intended to frighten the whole body of whist players, who were in truth stirred to a commotion. General Winfield Scott, one of the invited guests, with the resolution and promptness of an old soldier, sprang forward as if he was leading a charge in Lundy's Lane. Dr. Philip Thornton, of Rappahannock, another guest, was, however, nearer to the door and quicker than he. Presently the ghost, finding himself closely pressed, began to retreat, backing around the room, yet keeping his face to the foe, and as the Doctor was reaching out and trying to seize the ghost's nose with the view to twitch it off, the ghost was 'larruping' him over the shoulder with the long cane which he carried in one hand, while with the other hand he was struggling to keep from being tripped by the sheet which enveloped his body. When finally forced to surrender and the mask was taken from his face, Edgar laughed as heartily as ever a ghost did before.

"In February, 1826, Poe was entered as a student

at the University of Virginia. There began that course of conduct which, step by step, led to the wretchedness of the after part of his life. Sad, inexpressibly sad, and pathetic it was, indeed."

This sketch gives us a vivid account of the spirited, handsome, gifted boy as he appeared seventy-five years ago to one of his intimate friends and playmates, the son of his foster-father's partner, even then full of precocious elocutionary and athletic talents, spoiled, wayward, devoted to practical jokes and open-air sports, a leader in school, accomplished in all the pastimes of the day, — skating, swimming like a Leander or a Byron, leaping, running, acting in the Thespian performances, drilling in the military company, and — getting a too-rare chastisement for his capricious and thoughtless conduct.

Another interesting glimpse of Poe at this time is afforded by the following account sent the writer by Dr. Hugh Wythe Davis of Richmond, Virginia, whose uncle, Dr. Creed Thomas, was Poe's deskmate at Burke's School. Dr. Thomas was very intimate with Poe in after years also, and died only a few months ago, aged eighty-seven :

" Dr. Thomas was educated at Burke's School in Richmond, Virginia, and at the University of Medicine of Maryland. At the first-named institution, which stood near the present site of Ford's Hotel, he was a deskmate of Edgar Allan Poe during the years 1823, 1824, and 1825, and a schoolfellow of the Stanards, Cabells, Seldens. Selden told somebody that Poe was a liar or a rascal. The embryo poet heard of it, and soon the boys were engaged in a fight. Selden was heavier than Poe whom he pommelled vigorously for some time. The delicate boy appeared

to submit with little resistance. Finally Poe turned the tables on Selden, and much to the surprise of the spectators, administered a sound whipping. When asked why he permitted Selden to pommel his head so long, Poe replied that he was waiting for his adversary to get out of breath before showing him a few things in the art of fighting.

"Poe was a quiet, peaceful youngster, and seldom got into a difficulty with his schoolmates. He was as plucky as any boy at school, however, and never permitted himself to be imposed upon. When it came to a question of looking after his individual rights, however, the young classic asserted himself. He was not at all popular with his schoolmates, being too retiring in disposition and singularly unsociable in manner. The only two boys he was intimate with were Monroe Stanard, who afterwards became Judge Stanard, and Robert G. Cabell. He was quite fond of both of them, and the three boys were continually in each other's company. It was a noticeable fact that he never asked any of his schoolmates to go home with him after school. Other boys would frequently spend the night or take dinner with each other at their homes, but Poe was seldom known to enter into this social intercourse. After he left the play-grounds at school that was an end of his sociability until the next day. Dr. Thomas was a member with Poe, Beverley Anderson, and William F. Ritchie, of the Thespian Society, that had its headquarters in the old wooden building which stood on the northeast corner of Sixth and Marshall Streets. Poe was a member of this society, contrary to the wishes of Mr. Allan. He had undoubted talent in this direction. The audience usually numbered about forty or fifty. A small admis-

sion fee was charged, and this was divided between the actors, who used it as pin money. A singular fact, Dr. Thomas used to say, was that Poe never got a whipping at school. He remembered that the other boys used to come in for a flogging quite frequently, and that he got his share. Mr. Burke believed in the moral power of the birch. He accepted the theory, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child,' as a matter of course, and the consequence was that whippings were so frequent that they created no sensation among the scholars who witnessed them." [1]

It is thus seen to be untrue that "no one knew him;" on the contrary, the boy Poe had many devoted friends: Ellis, Thomas, Stanard, and Cabell are distinctly mentioned, or mention themselves, among them; and later, when he went to the University, these friends increased in number and cordiality: Tucker, Burwell, Beale, Slaughter, Wertenbaker, Willis, Ambler, all testified to their friendship, many of them in their written recollections. The "marvellous boy that perished in his pride" was not prouder; Leopardi, agonized by humiliating deformity, could not at times hold more aloof; the shrinking and shadowy Tennyson, wandering over his lawns, did not recoil at times with more physical horror from contact with the clamorous world; but there is nothing in Poe's early years to justify the assertion that he passed them in supreme loneliness.[2]

[1] Obituary Notice of Dr. Creed Thomas, Richmond *Dispatch*, Feb. 24, 1899.

[2] See Mrs. Whitman's "Edgar Poe and his Critics," Preface to the First Edition, 1860, where a similar statement is warmly combated. Cf. the utterances of A. Lang, *N. Y. Independent*, Nov. 23, 1899, who doubts whether Poe was even a "gentleman."

His feeling of unmeasured superiority to his schoolmates in book-learning and athletic accomplishments; his boyish gift of rhyming readily; the applause of his teachers and playmates at the performances of the infant prodigy; and the undisguised admiration of the home-circle for his dramatic and poetic powers, undoubtedly enhanced an innate self-consciousness which never left Poe to his latest breath; but it is baseless, useless, and cruel to affirm that he was "the man in the crowd" pursued even as a child by relentless instincts of solitariness.

There are two spots in this normal childhood that loom up with shining distinctness: the episode with Mrs. Jane Stith Stanard, and his first love.

We quote a passage from Mrs. Whitman's "Edgar Poe and his Critics," pp. 48–55, in which this charming biographer and defender of the poet gives us a glimpse of the boy at fourteen in the throes of a first affection:

"While at the academy in Richmond, he one day accompanied a schoolmate to his home, where he saw for the first time Mrs. H.[elen] S.[tanard],[1] the mother of his young friend. This lady, on entering the room, took his hand and spoke some gentle and gracious words of welcome, which so penetrated the sensitive heart of the orphan boy as to deprive him of the power of speech, and for a time almost of consciousness itself. He returned home in a dream, with but one thought, one hope in life, — to hear again the sweet and gracious words that had made the desolate world so beautiful to him, and filled his lonely heart with the oppression of a new joy. This lady after-

[1] Really, Mrs. Jane Stith Stanard: Poe disliked the name Jane, and substituted Helen for it.

wards became the *confidante* of all his boyish sorrows, and hers was the one redeeming influence that saved and guided him in the earlier days of his turbulent and passionate youth."

When she died of mental alienation in 1824, it is related that the boy-poet would not give her up, but haunted her grave in the April and autumnal nights with the passionate feeling of undying companionship, even with the dead, which afterwards ran like a line of fire through his romances of death, trance, and sentience after death.

This abiding element of Poe's life, his intimacy with Mrs. Stanard, and her sorrowful death, furnished the theme for that exquisite woman-element in his poems which beads itself into a string of pearls and runs now in shadowy and beautiful shapes of dreamlike Melusines through his Tales, now coins itself into cameo-like stanzas, "To Helen," "Lenore," "Annabel Lee" or the lost "Ulalume," in stanzas as imperishable in beauty as those which rise wraithlike from the passion and spume of the early life of Goethe. What would these two lives indeed — Goethe's and Poe's — be without their rich idealizations of woman snatched from Dreamland, but hovering in the mid-air of actual experience!

"It was the image of this lady" (continues Mrs. Whitman), "long and tenderly and sorrowfully cherished, that suggested the stanzas 'To Helen,' published among the poems written in his youth, which Russell Lowell says have in them a grace and symmetry of outline such as few poets ever attain, and which are valuable as displaying 'what can only be expressed by the contradictory phrase of *innate experience*.'"

"Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore
That gently o'er a perfumed sea
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore."

"In a letter now before us" (continues the lady), "written within a twelvemonth of his death, Edgar Poe speaks of the love which inspired these verses as the 'one, idolatrous, and purely *ideal* love of his passionate boyhood.' In one of the numbers of 'Russell's Magazine,' there is a transcript of the first published version of the exquisite poem entitled 'Lenore,' commencing —

"'Ah! broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever.
Let the bell toll: a saintly soul floats on the Stygian River.'

"It is remarkable, that, in this earlier version, instead of LENORE, we have the name of HELEN. The lines were afterwards greatly altered, and improved in structure and expression; and the name of Lenore was introduced, apparently for its adaptation to rhythmical effect."

With Sarah Elmira Royster, a neighbor of Mr. Allan's, came a real love-affair. This young lady was a year or two younger than the mature Poe (aged sixteen or so) and met his advances in an amiable and appreciative spirit. "He was a gentleman" (she writes) "in every sense of the word. He was one of the most fascinating and refined men I ever knew. I never saw him under the influence of wine. I admired him more than any man I ever knew."

In an earlier letter the same lady continues:[1]

[1] *Appleton's Journal*, May, 1878.

"Edgar was a beautiful boy; he was not very talkative, and his general manner was sad, but when he did talk his conversation was very pleasant. He was devoted to the first Mrs. Allan, and she to him. Of his own parents he never spoke. I have seen his brother Henry, who was in the navy. He had very few associates, but he was very intimate with Ebenezer Berling, a widow's son, of about the same age as himself. Berling was an interesting, intelligent young man, but somewhat inclined to dissipation. They used to visit our house together very frequently.

"Edgar was warm and zealous in any cause he was interested in, being enthusiastic and impulsive. He had strong prejudices, and hated everything coarse and unrefined. I can still remember him saying to me, when an acquaintance made an unladylike remark, 'I am surprised you should associate with anyone who could make such a remark!'

"He was very generous. He drew beautifully and drew a pencil likeness of me in a few minutes. He was passionately fond of music. . . . It distresses me greatly when I see anything scurrilous written about him. Do not believe a tenth part of what is said. It is chiefly produced by jealousy and envy. I have the greatest respect for his memory. Our acquaintance was kept up until he left to go to the University, and during the time he was at the University he wrote to me frequently. But my father intercepted the letters because we were too young — for no other reason. I was between fifteen and sixteen when we were engaged. I was not aware that he had written to me from the University until after I was married, when I was seventeen, to Mr. Shelton."

Thus the Ideal and the Real jostle each other in

actual life: "the one like the shield of bronze whose color was so long contested by the knights of fable;" the other, "presenting at least a silver lining."[1]

The year 1825 seems to have been spent by Poe in busy preparation, under private tutors, for entrance into the University of Virginia. The University, planned and founded by Jefferson, had opened the year before and had attracted great attention all over the country. Its magnificent buildings, its corps of accomplished European professors, drawn mostly from England, its novel system of elective studies, and its hitherto unknown and untried system of democratic self-government by the students themselves, had interested educators everywhere, and many eyes were turned curiously on Jefferson's experiment.

[1] Mrs. S. H. Whitman, "Edgar Poe and his Critics," p. 69.

[redacted]

AR ALLAN POE.

[illegible]

CHAPTER II.

1826.

POE'S ENVIRONMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.[1]

I.

ALBEMARLE County, in which the University of Virginia is situated, is one of the finest and most fruitful counties in the Old Dominion. Originally near the centre of Virginia before it was dismembered, it seemed to President Jefferson an ideal spot for the erection of the great institution which he had been planning since 1779 and which, overcoming innumerable obstacles, he succeeded in establishing and opening in March, 1825. Around this lovely land, through which trails for more than one hundred miles the delightful greenery of the South-West Mountains, gather all the confluent lines of grace that characterize a gently mountainous country where, exhausted with uplifting giant Alleghanies, the poetic mountain sprites exercise their ingenuity in carving out graceful vales, long undulating slopes, the winding labyrinths of silver rivers, and wooded dells thick with Vallombrosan shades.

[1] Unpublished MSS. Archives of the University of Virginia. Bound Catalogues of the University of Virginia, 1825–44.

Schele de Vere Catalogue of Students of the University of Virginia, 1825–75.

Files of the University of Virginia Magazine, 1856–57, 1900.

H. B. Adams' "Jefferson and the University of Virginia."

Albemarle might indeed, apart from its musical name, be called the "picture" county of Virginia, and it was the spirit of the poet who wrote our great epic of the Declaration of Independence that chose this favored spot as the birthplace, cradle, and home of his University. From his own Parnassus of Monticello, three miles away, he looked down and beheld the spacious vale wherein the cunning magic of his persuasive tongue had evoked a scene of Grecian beauty that breathed the spirit of Old World enchantment. Obdurate legislatures had melted before the "old man eloquent" as he pleaded for his University; avaricious pockets emptied their contents into his Educational Fund as he spoke of the boundless advantages of the new institution; distinguished foreign savants listened with attention as his marvellous pen discoursed in countless letters (30,000 of Jefferson's letters are said to be in existence!) of his plans and projects for an Oxford, a Cambridge or a Göttingen in the New World.

The result was the beautiful scene that lay below Monticello, the exquisitely situated mountain-crest towering eight hundred feet in the air where "The Father of the University of Virginia" had built himself an eyrie among the century-old trees overlooking a view of rolling, river-bounded loveliness, where Piedmont hill and sapphire Blue Ridge, gaunt Alleghany and solemn Ragged Mountains blend into a delightful harmony, all gathering round and enshrining in their bosom the jewel of Jefferson, the white-domed University.

Such was the spot where Edgar Allan Poe arrived in 1826 and wrote his name, the 136th on the list, on good St. Valentine's Day, in the Matriculation Book of the University.

A young man's teachers are often those who in after life influence his career most vitally; and Jefferson's sagacity had gathered at the University a galaxy of brilliant scholars who soon worked themselves into this influence and into reputations unrivalled for learning, profundity and force. The eight men with whom Edgar Poe was thrown into intimate official and scholastic contact were Dunglison, Long, Blaettermann, Key, Bonnycastle, Emmet, Tucker, and Lomax; and from this list one dare not leave out the venerable librarian of the University, William Wertenbaker, who was appointed by Jefferson himself and held the position for forty-three years: a man with whom Poe came frequently in contact.

"During the year 1826," said Mr. Wertenbaker,[1] "there used to come into the library a handsome young student, perhaps eighteen years of age, in search of old French books, principally histories; that young man, even the little I chanced to see of him, made a deep impression on me, and in fact I am sure I will always tenderly cherish my recollections of Edgar Allan Poe."

Six out of the eight professors (1826) were foreign-born, a little irreverently called by the students in the Faculty Minute Books of the time, when they were summoned up for some student pranks, "those damned European professors."

At least seven were men of the highest character, scholarship, and worth; all were comparatively young, except Mr. George Tucker, who had been called from the halls of Congress by Jefferson to assume the professorship of Moral Philosophy, and who afterwards greatly distinguished himself as the biog-

[1] University of Virginia Magazine, Vol. XIX., p. 45.

rapher of Jefferson, the historian of the United States, the novelist of the Shenandoah, and the brilliant essayist and statistician, first chairman of the faculty.

Another, Mr. George Long, had an eminent literary career, adorned by many successes and intimately interwoven with the intellectual life of Greece and Rome as investigator, geographer, historian, editor, and translator.

The University Matriculation Book of 1826 shows that Edgar Allan Poe wrote his name and the date of his birth,[1] the name of his parent or guardian, his residence and the schools that he attended as follows: Edgar A. Poe; | 19 January, 1809; | John Allan;[2] | Richmond, Va.; | and the Schools of Ancient and Modern Languages.[3]

Out of the 177 students present that year, 107 "elected" Ancient Languages and 90 elected Modern Languages, the number gathering from thirteen different states (Catalogues of the University of Virginia, 1825–44), including New York and Pennsylvania.

George Ticknor's active and open advocacy of the reform educational views of Jefferson had already aroused uneasiness in New England, and particularly at Harvard, whose alert and learned President, Josiah Quincy, favored the elective system and began to inquire into the workings of the new institution (Adams, 130). Edward Everett, too, viewed with admiring but critical eyes the Jefferson experiment and copied into his "North American Review" article for January, 1820, Jefferson's entire scheme of studies

[1] Not "the place," as Professor Woodberry states, "Edgar Allan Poe," p. 25.

[2] Misspelt Allen in the records.

[3] Professors Long and Blaettermann.

proposed for the University of Virginia and printed in the proceedings and report of the Commissioners for the University in 1818.

What induced Mr. Allan to send his adopted son to the University, apart from the boy's precocious talents and excellent preparation, and the reputation of the University, we know not; but hither he came in February, rooming, first on the Lawn, and then, after a pugilistic encounter with his room-mate, Miles George, transferring himself and his goods to No. 13, West Range, according to his friend, Mr. T. G. Tucker; to No. 17, West Range, according to another tradition.[1]

Being Poe's intimate friend at the University, Mr. Tucker may be taken, along with Mr. Wertenbaker and Mr. Burwell, as giving a fairly accurate account of Poe's career while the two young men were fellow-students. He describes the poet at this period of life as rather short of stature, thick, compactly set but active, an expert in all the athletic and gymnastic arts. A gymnasium had been opened in the University, and a military drill-master, one Matthews, from West Point, had been employed to instruct volunteers in military evolutions and tactics, — an association which may have influenced Poe, a little later, first to enter the army under an assumed name and then formally to enroll himself as a cadet at the United States Academy in 1830. Mr. Tucker in 1880 remembered his famous contemporary as bow-legged, jerky and hurried in his movements, and with the air and

[1] University of Virginia Magazine, Vol. XIX., p. 426 *seq.* Mr. Allan had only recently inherited large wealth from his uncle, Mr. Galt (1825), and thus felt able to give his foster-son the best University education.

action of a native-born Frenchman. He was very mercurial in his disposition and exceedingly fond of peach-and-honey. Seven-up and loo were his favorite games, for everybody played cards in those days, and he played in so impassioned a manner that it amounted almost to infatuation. Card-playing and drinking alike were carried on under the spell of impulse or uncontrolled excitement. His passion for strong drink was even then (continues Mr. Tucker) of a most marked and peculiar character. He would always seize the tempting glass, generally unmixed with sugar or water, — in fact, perfectly straight, — and without the least apparent pleasure, swallow the contents, never pausing until the last drop had passed his lips. One glass (the size is not stated) at a time was all that he could take; but this was sufficient to rouse his whole nervous nature into a state of strongest excitement, which found vent in a continuous flow of wild, fascinating talk that irresistibly enchanted every listener with siren-like power.

Poe is described as having been an excellent French and Latin scholar; he could read and speak both languages with great ease, although he could hardly be said to have known either language thoroughly. Greek he read indifferently. Time and again he would enter into the lecture-room (Pavilion V. or Pavilion IV., where Professors Long and Blaettermann lived) utterly unprepared to recite if called upon. But his brain was so active and his memory so excellent that only a few moments' study was necessary, and then he was ready to make the best recitation in the class. To have opportunity of "reading ahead". . . was all that Poe desired when unprepared. As a consequence of this wonderful faculty he was able to maintain a very

high position in his classes, and win for himself the admiration, but more often the envy of his fellow-students.

"It is delightful to know" (continues the author of the paper from which we are quoting: "Edgar Allan Poe while a student at the University of Virginia") "that Poe was not exempt from that college weakness . . . a good, healthy quarrel with . . . one's room-mate. When he first came to the University, he roomed on the Lawn with a young man from Richmond, Miles George. They had been together but a short time when something arose to disturb the harmonious intercourse — perhaps Miles refused to arise one morning to answer the knock of Mr. Wertenbaker (librarian and secretary of the faculty) who in those good old days made the rounds each morning to see if the fellows were up and dressed and ready for work, . . . or perhaps Edgar Allan was unwilling to count over the clothes on Monday morning when the washer-woman came [there were seven different ancient colored dames who in 1880 claimed to have washed for "Marse Ed. Poe!"]. They had a falling-out — and a genuine, good old-fashioned fight, retiring to a field near the University; and after one or two rounds they agreed that they were satisfied, shook hands, and returned to the University as warm friends, but not as room-mates. Poe after this little affair moved into No. 13 on West Range."

Poe's constant companions were Thomas S. Gholson (afterwards a distinguished Judge), Upton Beale and Philip Slaughter (later Episcopal ministers, the latter the eminent historiographer of the Diocese of Virginia), Wat Dunn, Wm. A. Creighton, and Wm. M. Burwell (afterwards well-known as editor of "De Bow's Review").

"Whatever Poe may have been in after years, he was at the University" (says Mr. Tucker) "as true and perfect a friend as the waywardness of his nature would allow. There was never then the least trace of insincerity, and never the least indication of that fickleness of disposition with which he was afterwards so often — although in the main, we think, unjustly — accused.

"Poe showed his warm appreciation and high respect for his friend Tucker by reading to him the early productions of his youth, — productions that his critical hand afterwards destroyed, thinking them unfit for publication. Sometimes, when he had written an article that Tucker would especially praise, he would call in a few of his friends and read it to them. Those men who were fortunate enough to hear these impromptu readings never forgot them, and those of the number who were still living in 1880 declared that there was no impression on their minds more strikingly vivid. They were mostly stories characterized by that same weirdness of style, graphically picturing horrible scenes and incidents, that so strongly marked all of his published writings. His little room on West Range was often filled with a small, select audience of his most particular friends who, spell-bound, scarcely breathed while they eagerly listened to some story, — strange and wild, like all the rest, — that he had just written and that he read with his whole soul thrown into every action and intonation of his voice — now loud and rapid, like the mad rush of many waters, and now sinking into a scarcely audible whisper, of some terrible sentence of incantation or curse sending a shiver over all that heard.

"On one occasion Poe read a story of great length

to some of his friends who, in a spirit of jest, spoke lightly of its merits, and jokingly told him that his hero's name, 'Gaffy,' occurred too often. His proud spirit would not stand such open rebuke; so in a fit of anger, before his friends could prevent him, he had flung every sheet into a blazing fire, and thus was lost a story of more than ordinary parts which, unlike most of his stories, was intensely amusing, entirely free from his usual sombre coloring and sad conclusions merged in a mist of impenetrable gloom. He was for a long time afterwards called by those in his particular circle 'Gaffy' Poe, a name that he never altogether relished.

"Gaming during the first two or three sessions of the University was very prevalent. In fact, during the early quarter of the present century it was indulged in to a certain extent more or less by our very best people. But, of course, it was something in an institution like this of so pernicious a nature as to demand a decided check. This, the year before his death, Mr. Jefferson attempted by trying to stop the general card-playing at the University; he and the Board of Visitors made an arrangement with the civil authorities to ferret out the most noted of the young gamblers and have them indicted and brought before the next Grand Jury. So on a given day the Sheriff with a goodly posse appeared within the doorway of one of the lecture-rooms just as the morning-roll was about to be called, ready to serve his writs on certain young men as they answered to their names. But these young rakes were not to be so easily ensnared in the toils of the enemy. They needed no word of warning; the mere glimpse of the Sheriff's shadow in the doorway with his men behind him, was more than enough to

convey to their minds an idea of what was coming. With Edgar Allan Poe for a leader they indiscriminately 'bolted,' — some through the open windows [probably at Professor Long's, a house having a lower room of many windows, now occupied by Prof. F. H. Smith], and some through the opposite door. Sheriff, posse, and professor were left in full possession of the empty lecture-room. Then the hot pursuit!

"But those who were most wanted made their successful escape, not to their rooms — they would not have been safe there; but off to the 'Ragged Mountains' over an unfrequented by-path, but one well-known to Poe and over which he had often travelled. They were aware it would not be well to return to the University until after night; so some of the party had managed in their hasty flight to snatch up a 'deck' or so of cards with which to while away the hours of their self-imposed banishment. Their place of retreat was a beautiful dell high up in the mountains, and very inaccessible, being far away from any beaten path, but the spot that was a favorite haunt with Poe. And here the fugitives remained three days."[1]

Many of Poe's well-known views on landscape gardening ("Landor's Cottage," "The Domain of Arnheim," etc.) were doubtless shaping themselves in his fertile youthful brain as he rambled over these Delectable Mountains and drank in their delicious beauty, doubtless too visiting the many lordly plantation houses in the neighborhood, swimming in the yellow Rivanna that cleaves the plain with its golden torrent, and tramping through the hickory and locust forests that

[1] The writer has considerably condensed the account in the Magazine.

fairly flash in spring with the white flame of the milky dogwood blossom.

The following recollections[1] by Mr. William Wertenbaker, were drawn up in 1869. The aged Librarian says:

"Mr. Poe was a student during the second session, which commenced February 1st and terminated December 15th, 1826. He signed the matriculation book on the 14th of February, and remained in good standing until the session closed. He was born on the 19th day of January, 1809, being a little over seventeen when he matriculated. He entered the schools of Ancient and Modern Languages, attending the lectures in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and Italian.

"I was myself a member of the last three classes, and can testify that he was tolerably regular in his attendance, and a successful student, having obtained distinction at the Final Examination in Latin and French; and this was at that time the highest honor a student could obtain. The present regulations in regard to degrees had not then been adopted. Under existing regulations he would have graduated in the two languages above named, and have been entitled to diplomas. On one occasion Professor Blaettermann requested his Italian class to render into English verse a portion of the lesson in Tasso, which he had assigned them for the next lecture. He did not require this of them as a regular class exercise, but recommended it as one from which he thought the students would derive benefit. At the next lecture

[1] Here reproduced by the present writer from his paper in *The Independent* for September, 1900, with the kind permission of the editor.

on Italian the Professor stated from his chair that Mr. Poe was the only member of the class who had responded to his suggestion, and paid a very high compliment to his performance. As Librarian I had frequent official intercourse with Mr. Poe, but it was at or near the close of the session before I met him in the social circle. After spending an evening together at a private house, he invited me in on our return to his room. It was a cold night in December, and his fire having gone pretty nearly out, by the aid of some tallow candles, and the fragments of a small table which he broke up for the purpose, he soon rekindled it, and by its comfortable blaze I spent a very pleasant hour with him. On this occasion he spoke with regret of the large amount of money he had wasted and of the debts he had contracted during the session. If my memory is not at fault, he estimated his indebtedness at $2,000, and, though they were gaming debts, he was earnest and emphatic in the declaration that he was bound by honor to pay, at the earliest opportunity, every cent of them. He certainly was not habitually intemperate, but he may occasionally have entered into a frolic. I often saw him in the lecture-room and in the library, but never in the slightest degree under the influence of intoxicating liquors. Among the professors he had the reputation of being a sober, quiet and orderly young man, and to them and the officers his deportment was uniformly that of an intelligent and polished gentleman. Although his practice of gaming did escape detection, the hardihood, intemperance and reckless wildness imputed to him by his biographers, had he been guilty of them, must inevitably have come to the knowledge of the faculty and met with

merited punishment. The records of which I was then, and am still, the custodian, attest that at no time during the session did he fall under the censure of the faculty. Mr. Poe's connection with the University was dissolved by the termination of the session on the 15th of December, 1826. He then wanted little over a month of having attained to the age of eighteen: the date of his birth was plainly entered in his own handwriting on the matriculation book. Were he now living, his age on the 19th of this month (January, 1869) would be sixty. He never returned to the University, and I think it probable that the night I visited him was the last he spent here. I draw this inference not from memory, but from the fact, that having no further use for his candles and table he made fuel of them.

"Mr. Poe's works are more in demand and more read than those of any other author, American or foreign, now in the library. To gratify curiosity, I copy from the register a list of the books which Mr. Poe borrowed from the library while he was a student: Rollin — 'Histoire Ancienne,' 'Histoire Romaine;' Robertson's — 'America;' Marshall's — 'Washington;' Voltaire — 'Histoire Particulière;' Dufief's — 'Nature Displayed.'" (University of Virginia, January, 1869.)

Mr. Wertenbaker's statements may well be supplemented by the following extracts from "Edgar A. Poe, and his College Contemporaries," published by the Hon. Wm. M. Burwell, editor of "De Bow's Review," in the New Orleans "Times-Democrat," May 18, 1884:

"My recollection of Poe, then little more than a boy, is that he was about five feet two or three inches

in height, somewhat bandy-legged, but in no sense muscular or apt in physical exercises. His face was feminine, with finely marked features, and eyes dark, liquid, and expressive. He dressed well and neatly. He was a very attractive companion, genial in his nature and familiar, by the varied life that he had already led, with persons and scenes new to the unsophisticated provincials among whom he was thrown. . . . What, however, impressed his associates most were his remarkable attainments as a classical scholar. The professor of ancient languages and literature was an accomplished linguist and philologer. He was a terror to those who had only learned to translate the curriculum of authors taught in the average academy. To these Juvenal and Statius, Homer and Hesiod were the bounds of all classical knowledge, while to most of them the history, literature, geography, and the social conditions of the ancients beyond the lids of the text-books and the dictionary, were unknown.

"With this literature in texts and comments Poe was familiar. It had no doubt been inculcated at Stoke-Newington and is manifest in many beautiful allusions throughout his writings. . . . Among the most significant tributes to his extraordinary powers of analysis and metaphysical reasoning may be noted that Jules Verne, in one of his later novels . . . pronounces Poe the ablest analytical writer of his day, and employs the mathematical methods of *The Gold-Bug* to solve a cryptographic mystery in his own story.

"The particular dissipation of the University at this time was gaming with cards, and into this Poe plunged with a recklessness of nature that knew no bounds. . . . He called on the writer in Baltimore

after his return, as was understood, from Russia. He was in temporary trouble incurred by intemperance.

"Whatever may have been his natural tendencies to dissipation, Poe found a state of things favorable to their development at the University. Southern young men were indulged in abundant means and entire absence of restraint. They flocked to this new institution as to a watering-place. . . . To the first sessions of this admirable school poured in the Southern youth, most of them intent upon availing themselves of the advantages afforded. Among them, however, were many who had little other object than to combine enjoyment with the preparatory routine of a liberal education. Some of this class arrived with unlimited means, others with elegant equipages. One came from the Eastern Shore with a tandem of blooded horses, a servant, a fowling-piece and a pointer or two. Some were afflicted with habits of extravagance, and contempt for the toilsome acquisition of Knowledge. . . . Mr. Jefferson, having assumed that these high-spirited coadjutors in the defense of our constitutional ramparts comprehended his patriotic motives, had provided no discipline for their scholastic deportment. He confided that the restraints of propriety would be sufficient to make them behave themselves as gentlemen.

"They certainly did behave themselves as gentlemen of the highest style. They gamed, fought duels, attended weddings for thirty miles around, and went in debt in the most liberal manner.

"But we repeat that the University was not filled with this gay and determined class which has been described. There were hundreds who appreciated the privileges of the institution, and who paid no attention to the follies which occurred among their fellow-

students. These steady students passed through their course of study and vindicated its value by their after lives.

"The particular habit of gaming prevailed because there was no other excitement in which the animal spirits of these wild young men could have evaporated. The buildings first completed stood in the midst of uncultivated fields and other unattractive scenery. The county of Albemarle contained many families of the highest worth. Indeed, it had furnished many of the most eminent men in the State's history. Mr. Jefferson, Lewis, the explorer of the Missouri, Clark, his associate, Gen. Rogers Clark, who captured Kaskaskia from the British, General Sumter of the Revolution, the Minors, Gilmers, Carters, Carrs and others were all natives of Albemarle, but these families were scattered over a large country. The court-house town of Charlottesville had been the place near which the prisoners captured at Saratoga had been confined. It had been the temporary seat of the Legislature during the invasion or raid of Tarleton. It had a population of several hundred, but at the period now spoken of Mr. Jefferson had recorded, as one of the religious tolerations, that there being no church in the village, each of the principal church persuasions held its services in the court-house under a rotation agreed on among themselves. The families of the professors were too limited to furnish social facilities to the students. So far, then, from there being at or around the University a social intercourse of sufficient extent to have provided even reasonable recreation for so many young men, there was not even a public opinion strong enough to rebuke their excesses.

"The public opinion and corporate ordinances of

the village were alike disregarded. The disorder and dissipation of the students were subjects of indignant censure. The few merchants and hotels found their accounts in this extravagance, though the reckless creation of debt led to the enactment of a statute subsequently by which such debts when beyond the reasonable wants of a student, were declared void. A party of students on a frolic were coming along the road between the village and the University, when they suddenly encountered the professor of moral philosophy and political economy. Most of the party escaped; but one, after a distinguished advocate, disdained concealment. 'I am,' said he, 'K. M. M. of Tuscaloosa, Ala., too firm to fly, and far too proud to yield.' 'And,' said the professor, 'Mr. M. might have added "almost too drunk to stand."' "

II.

A close study of the Faculty Books for 1825, 1826, and 1827 reveals many facts of interest to the student of University life in Virginia in the first quarter of the century.

Starting out with a democratic theory that the students should be a self-governing body and should — being put on their honor — take care of their own morals and manners, Mr. Jefferson and the early trustees of the institution were before long brought to the conclusion that an outside police was essential to the comfort and reputation of both students and professors. A riot having broken out in October, 1825, among the matriculates, the professors informed Mr. Jefferson that they would resign in a body if a proper police

were not appointed to take care of the grounds and buildings, and of their inhabitants. Rules and regulations gradually increased in number and severity (there were already some ninety odd printed in the Enactments of 1825); the blood that oozed from Draco's famous code began to sprinkle the laws of the "rude forefathers" of the Virginia "hamlet;" and tradition yet lives that one of Jefferson's own kinsmen was the first student expelled, Roman-like, by the angered founder, through the faculty, from his beloved institution.

As early as December, 1825, a University Reading Room was suggested; the Lawn, well-known and beloved by all University men as the beautiful verdure-clad parallelogram that flows in dropping, five-fold terraces from the column-crowned esplanade of the Rotunda down to Lovers' Walk of the olden days, and to the Ionic-pillared Aula of the present, edged by cloistered dormitories and by the Greek porticoes of the professors' Pavilions, is first mentioned in the Minutes in October, 1825; the old University bell, purchased by Jefferson himself (now cracked, and preserved as a sacred relic in the Brooks Museum), tolled for the first time July 5, 1826, in honor of the august memory of the great President, who had died the day before; and the first fourth of July oration was appointed to be delivered in this memorable year.

This year, too, a library catalogue was suggested; the library (originally placed in the old Central College building, now Pavilion VII., the residence of Prof. N. K. Davis, and first of the Pavilions to be built) was ordered opened every day except Saturday and Sunday, from 3.30 to 5 P.M., so that students might consult the rare and fine collection of standard

works picked and chosen by Jefferson himself, and afterwards enriched by President Madison's collection and many miscellaneous donations and purchases.

Over and over again during these troublesome years — a triad of experimental beginnings — the students' names were ordered to be painted on the doors of their dormitories, and professors were permitted to break down these doors if they were not instantly opened on requisition ; but for some reason the painting does not appear to have been done. Parents and guardians were admitted to the examinations, reports of which were ordered printed in 1826, in the Richmond "Enquirer" and other papers ; and in midsummer, 1827, there is a record of examinations beginning at 5 o'clock in the morning !

Ever since this same year the janitor has rung the morning alarum-bell at 6.30, and this year was also signalized by the first use of the merit system in the arrangement of the names of the successful examinees, the names being arranged in several divisions (1st, 2nd, 3rd) according to the standing of the student ; the earlier announcements, as in Poe's two certificates quoted below, having been alphabetical. The final examinations of this year seem to have lasted only one and one-half to two and one-half hours each. Professors' reports were handed in and discussed in full faculty meeting in 1826 and 1827, and the first reference to monthly circulars to parents occurs in October, 1827. The faculty balloted for chairman, and already, in 1827, there were complaints of the arduous duties of the chairmanship.

A valued correspondent throws amusing light on the difficulties of student life at the University in those days, and writes :

"I will relate a little incident of Dr. Thomas' " — Thomas was Poe's desk-mate at Burke's Academy, Richmond, — "student days at the University as he told me. It may be an incentive to students of to-day. At that time, while Mr. Jefferson was Rector, . . . there was only one text-book in Mixed Mathematics, which had to be used by a class of ten students to prepare on the lectures given by the professor. Consequently, the class would divide in two sections, one party studying until one o'clock at night, and the other party after that time until morning ! "

No wonder that the chairmanship went a-begging ; the professors would not elect, and the appointment had finally to be made by the Visitors.

Poe's introduction to Latin and Greek, to ancient rhythms and metres in their higher artistic forms, and to ancient and modern literatures in all their myriad cultural and æsthetic associations, was thus in the hands of accomplished men who took him up at the point where his thorough training in England for five years and his brilliant record at Mr. Clarke's and Mr. Burke's classical schools in Richmond for four or five years more, rendered him their fit and apt pupil. Col. J. T. L. Preston attested privately and publicly — especially in his reminiscences of Poe in the Ingram Biography — the poet's rare accomplishments — for a mere boy — in reading and "capping" Latin verse, and Professor Blaettermann eulogized his translation from Tasso. It may not be at all impossible that Poe's penchant for geography, wild and weird as it is, in "Arthur Gordon Pym," "The Journal of Julius Rodman," and elsewhere, may have been suggested by Professor Long's passion for this study and continuous harping on it, following Jefferson's contention that

geography and history must be studied together as essential subsidiaries to textual researches in Latin and Greek; and Poe's passion for moon-hoaxes and lunar voyages may have had their inception in Professor Tucker's "A Voyage to the Moon," published in 1827 and reviewed by Dr. Dunglison in the "American Quarterly" for March, 1828. "Its evident aim was to fulfil for the existing age," says the Doctor, "what Swift had so successfully accomplished for that which had passed; to attack, by the weapons of ridicule, those votaries of knowledge who may have sought to avail themselves of the universal love of novelty amongst mankind to acquire celebrity, etc., who may have been misled by their own ill-regulated imaginations to obtrude upon the world their crude and imperfect theories and systems, to the manifest retardation of knowledge." [1]

It was at any rate the seed-time for this precocious genius who, according to every account, had already composed many a rhyme, even before he came to the University, and possessed a tropically luxuriant imagination only too ready to take in hints and suggestions from every quarter.

His fondness for French and for France was evinced by the little episode in Richmond in 1824, when Lafayette visited the city, and by Poe's historical readings in that language in 1826. In 1824 Lafayette had visited Jefferson and was superbly entertained at a banquet in one of the unfinished corridors of the Rotunda; and traditions still float about the ancient burgh of enthusiastic spectators watching the three presidents driving around in a coach with the French general as their guest.

[1] University of Virginia Magazine, XIX. 557.

While Poe was at the University, the death of Jefferson occurred, on the ever-memorable 4th of July, 1826, when he and his president-friend Adams passed over to the other shore on the same day.

The years 1825, 1826, and 1827 were undoubtedly critical and crucial years in the history of the University. The novelty of the educational experiment, heralded far and wide over the continent; the scepticism with which it had been viewed by Northern specialists in pedagogy; the doubt as to whether a faculty so thoroughly European could adapt itself to republican institutions; the untried democratic government of the students by themselves; the abolition (so warmly advocated at Harvard by George Ticknor), of the ancient class system, and the wholesale introduction of the elective system of the German universities, a hundred years in advance of the time; the introduction of non-compulsory attendance at chapel and of optional military drill the very first year of the University; the establishment of workshops for practical education in 1825; the encouragement of vaccination by gratis treatment, inaugurated by the medical professors under the supervision of Jefferson — were all items and experiments viewed, some with interest, others with amazement and incredulity by the pedagogues of the time.

The Minutes of this period abound in allusions to the wildness and extravagance of the young men, peculiar not to the University, but common to the whole country during the first decades of the century. Boyish pranks of all kinds, such as ringing the college bell, firing of squibs and pistols, playing loo and whist, etc., are duly and solemnly recorded in these naïve notes (which were never intended for the

public eye), along with the mention of drinking "mint-slings," apple-toddy, and egg-nog, the keeping of dogs by the students, gambling, riotous living, and licentious conduct. It was merely the bubbling, ebullient life of the Young Republic released for a moment from discipline, gambolling in its conscious strength, effervescing momentarily in intemperance and revelry, not essentially or irremediably bad.

In fact, of the men who were at the University with Poe in 1826, a long and remarkable list may be compiled showing thirty or forty who became distinguished in various departments of literary, political or ecclesiastical life, his class-mates or intimate friends; members of legislatures, members of Congress, consuls, generals, doctors of divinity, judges, a governor, chairmen of the Faculty, University professors, presidents of colleges, missionaries, editors, scientists, officers in the United States and Confederate States armies, physicians, railroad presidents, — a list[1] long and remarkable indeed, partially as follows:

Baylor, Richard, Member Virginia Legislature.

Boyd, T. J., Member Va. Legislature and of Board of Public Works.

Brown, Algernon S., M.D.; Member of La. Legislature.

Brown, Geo. F., U. S. Consul to Algiers.

Burwell, Wm. M., Author, Editor of De Bow's Review.

[1] The list of contemporaries of Poe drawn up by Hon. Wm. M. Burwell (New Orleans *Times Democrat* for May 18, 1884) is very inaccurate; ours is taken from the official catalogue of the University for 1826.

This list was compiled for the editor by the obliging Librarian of the University, Mr. F. W. Page.

Carter, John A., Member of Va. Convention of 1850; Member Va. Legislature.

Chalmers, Joseph W., Vice-Chancellor of Mississippi; Member U. S. Senate; Judge.

Coleman, Henry E., Member Va. Legislature; County Supt. Schools.

Collier, Robert R., Member Va. Senate.

Daniel, Wm., Judge.

Davis, J. A. G., Professor of Law and Chairman of Faculty U. Va.

Dixon, Henry T., Major and Paymaster U. S. A.

Gholson, Thomas S., District Judge, Member of Congress of Confederate States (Poe's intimate friend).

Graham, Geo. Mason, Capt. U. S. Vol. Mexico; Vice-President and Supervisor Louisiana State Military Academy; Adj. Gen'l La.

Harrison, Gessner, eminent philologist, Professor and Chairman of the Faculty of the University of Va.

Harvie, Lewis E., Member of Va. Legislature, President R. & D. R. R.

Holladay, Albert L., Presbyterian Minister, Missionary to Persia, President of Hampden-Sidney College.

Hubard, Edmund W., Member of Congress.

Hunter, R. M. T., M. C. and U. S. Senator, Senator C. S., Secretary of State Confederate States, Treasurer of Virginia.

Lee, Zaccheus C., An eloquent and able advocate, of Washington.

Lewis, Geo. W., Member of Va. Legislature; Member Va. Senate; Judge.

Loving, Wm. V., Commonwealth's Attorney; Judge.

Magruder, B. H., Colonel; Member Va. Legislature.

Magruder, John Bankhead, Capt. U. S. A. in Mexico; Maj.-Gen. C. S. A.

Murphy, Wm. M., Member Alabama Legislature.

Pleasants, Hugh R., Author, Editor of the Richmond Whig and of the Dispatch.

Preston, John S., Orator, Brig. General C. S. A.

Scott, Robert E., Commonwealth's Attorney; Member of Va. Legislature, Member of Virginia Convention of 1861.

Shackelford, Henry, Member Va. Legislature; Commonwealth's Attorney; Judge.

Sims, Wm. D., Member Va. Legislature.

Slaughter, Philip, Episcopal Minister; D.D., author, Historiographer of the Diocese of Virginia.

Sothoron, J. H., Member Maryland Legislature.

Swann, Thomas, Pres. B. & O. R. R., Mayor of Baltimore, Governor of Maryland, Member of Congress.

Taylor, Robert E., Member Va. Legislature.

Taylor, Tazewell, Member Va. Convention of 1850; Col. C. S. A., Member of Va. Senate.

Tutwiler, Henry, 1st M.A. of the University of Virginia, University Professor in Alabama.

Wallace, Robert, Member Va. Legislature.

Wertenbaker, Wm., 42 years P.M. Univ. of Va., 43 years librarian and secretary of the Faculty.

Willis, John, Member Va. Legislature.

It will thus be seen that there could have been in many respects no more admirable social and intellectual environment in the United States for a young man of precocious promise than existed at the University of Virginia in 1826. The place was renowned for its hospitality, heightened by the delightful sociability that reigned at Monticello; the faculty was full of brilliant men of European culture, distinguished or soon to be in various lines of literature and research; while the vices prevalent at Charlottesville were only those prevalent all over the continents of America and Europe at the time.

A sensitive youth, impressionable to all the fashions of the day, and surrounded by a social circle that thought convivial drinking and card-playing "At Homes" indispensable to remaining at all in polite society, would easily fall in with the habits of his "set," and perhaps cultivate them with passion and excess. It was the fault of the time, as the Essays of Elia and the contemporary novels will show to any one who is not maliciously predetermined to fix these vices on Poe alone.

That Poe was not indifferent to the advantages of debate and of literary exercises is shown by his signature: "Edgar A. Poe, Secretary Jefferson Society," appended to the Minutes of the Jefferson Literary Society.[1] His own fine gifts of elocution were noted even when he was a child and continued to distinguish him all through his life, in public as well as in private. Many testimonials attest the beauty of his readings and recitals in parlor and hall, gifts inherited from his mother, who was both musically and dramatically en-

[1] It is well to add that some doubt has been thrown on the authenticity of this signature.

dowed; and these gifts were doubtless exercised in the halls of the Jefferson Society where so many future Congressmen and legislators were his compeers and associates.

The following extracts from the Faculty Minutes of December, 1826, give the finishing touch to Poe's career at the University of Virginia:

I.

"At a meeting of the Faculty, December 15th, 1826, —

"Mr. Long made a report of the examination of the classes belonging to the School of Ancient Languages, and the names of the students who excelled at the examination of these classes:

Senior Latin Class:

Gessner Harrison of Rockingham.
Albert L. Holladay of Spottsylvania.
Berthier Jones of Amelia.
Edgar A. Poe of Richmond City.
etc., etc., etc."

II.

"The names of the students who excelled in the Senior French Class as reported by the Professor of Modern Languages were as follows:

Philip St. George Ambler of Richmond City.
John Cary of Campbell.
Gessner Harrison of Rockingham.
Wm. Michie of Hanover.
Conway Nutt of Culpepper.
Edgar A. Poe of Richmond City.
Wm. Selden of Norfolk.
Henry Tutwiler of Rockingham."

Thus Poe's University career was crowned with scholastic honors in the particular studies which he "elected" to pursue. He was only seventeen years of age, an orphan, the foster-son of a man who in the last six months had inherited a fortune: a child supremely gifted with the excitable poet's temperament and therefore easily urged to nervous excess, thrown suddenly, a mere boy, into the free-and-easy set of University students over whom, at the time, no restraints had been set. The wonder is that Edgar Poe did not turn out a complete reprobate instead of being mentioned in the final examination reports as "distinguished" in Latin and French. During the next three or four years he still further distinguished himself by publishing three volumes of poems at eighteen, nineteen, and twenty-one years of age respectively, the product of these so-called dissipated years when he was supposed to be doing little or nothing. Ill-fitted as he was, yet, for his life-work, undisciplined, absolutely alone in the world, without a guiding hand to direct and lead him, the object of a capricious charity that might at any time instantaneously be withdrawn — as actually happened — a waif from the start, yet with influential relations who never seem to have acknowledged him, the eccentric lad of genius developed into the sensitive and sarcastic man with no weapon but his tongue and pen, urged by the irresistible force of his mind to write, to attempt creative work, to compose poems from his tenth year, to long for public recognition.

Apparently with little or no moral training, yet with an abnormal consciousness of conscience, the boy left the University to return to a home whither, as one of his early friends significantly remarks, *he was never known*

to invite even his most intimate friend, in the spontaneity of boyish friendship; a home now rendered chilling and inhospitable from the rumors of his escapades at the University, which he was soon to leave, first for the Allan counting-house and then for the army, in the desperate endeavor to work out for himself a position and a career. For the next three years the iron indeed entered into the soul of the boy; his one solace was the beautiful gift of Poesy, which burst all bounds of restraint and was soon to revel in the bold and fanciful lines of *Al Aaraaf.*

CHAPTER III.

1827–1829.

THE EARLY POEMS. THE LEGENDARY YEARS.

In the life of nearly every literary man who has occupied a conspicuous position in the world's eye there is a "dark period" — a period of eclipse, obscuration or hibernation — during which he mysteriously disappears, as the religious recluse does in his periodical "retreat," and is lost to the public gaze. The literary historian immediately thinks of the seasons of obscuration in the careers of Keats and Shelley, of Hugo and Heine, of Coleridge and Gray, of Chateaubriand and Gérard de Nerval — to mention only a few modern instances — and wonders what these men of genius were doing in the eclipse-period.

Poe was no exception to a very general rule. The period 1827–1833 embraces more than a lustrum of shadow only a part of which has been skilfully illuminated by Professor Woodberry's investigations.

In December, 1826, Poe graduated in Latin and French at the University of Virginia. If one can regard "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" as at all autobiographic — and it is full of local and personal touches that cannot but be regarded as such — he writes at the beginning of this tale:

"During the fall of the year 1827, while residing near Charlottesville, Virginia, I casually made the acquaintance of Mr. Augustus Bedloe."

This date does not harmonize by a few months with the now known army record of Poe, but it seems to show that he was at least in Virginia a part of the year 1827. The current account is, that he returned to Richmond, entered Mr. Allan's counting-room, quarrelled with his adopted father on account of the large "debts of honor" he had contracted at cards while at the University, and left the Allan home in consequence.

This account is confirmed by Mr. Allan himself in a letter dated May 6, 1829, in which he says:

"He [Poe] left me in consequence of some gambling at the University at Charlottesville, because (I presume) I refused to sanction a rule that the shopkeepers and others had adopted there, making Debts of Honour of all indiscretions. I have much pleasure in asserting that he stood his examination at the close of the year with great credit."[1]

The second fact of importance for the year 1827 is the appearance at Boston, probably in June, of a diminutive volume: "Tamerlane and Other Poems. By a Bostonian: Boston: Calvin F. S. Thomas . . . Printer": "the tiniest of tomes, numbering, inclusive of titles and half-titles, only forty pages, and measuring 6⅜ by 4⅛ inches. Its diminutiveness" (continues Mr. R. H. Shepherd), "probably quite as much as the fact that it was 'suppressed through circumstances of a private nature,' accounts for its almost entire disappearance. The motto on the title-page purports to be from Cowper: that from Martial, which closes the Preface (*Nos haec novimus esse nihil*) was, by a curious coincidence, the very same that figured on the

[1] Woodberry, Life, p. 42.

title-page of Alfred and Charles Tennyson's Louth volume.

"In 1827, when the little Tamerlane booklet was thus modestly ushered into the world, Poe had not yet attained his nineteenth year. Both in promise and in actual performance, it may claim to rank as the most remarkable production that any English-speaking and English-writing poet of this century has published in his teens.

"In this earliest form of it the poem which gives its chief title to the little volume is divided into seventeen sections, of irregular length, containing a total of 406 lines. 'Tamerlane' was afterwards remodelled and rewritten, from beginning to end, and in its final form, as it appeared in the author's edition of 1845, is divided into twenty-three sections, containing a total of 243 lines. Eleven explanatory prose notes are added, which disappear in all subsequent editions. . . . Of the nine 'Fugitive Pieces' which follow, only three, and these in a somewhat altered form, were included by the author in his later collection. The remaining six have never been reprinted in book form" [this was in 1884].[1]

This precious little volume, only forty copies of which are said to have been printed, was published by the nineteen-year-old printer, Calvin F. S. Thomas, then living in Boston. Thomas afterwards moved West and died, probably in Springfield, Mo., in 1876, without being aware that he had ushered into the world the most unique specimen of American poetic genius.

[1] Tamerlane and Other Poems. By Edgar Allan Poe. First Published at Boston in 1827 and now First Republished from a Unique Copy of the Original Edition, with a Preface. By Richard Herne Shepherd. London: George Redway: MDCCCLXXXIV.

The poor little volume is now one of the bibliophile's "nuggets," and a copy of it, going, at the McKee sale in November, 1900, for $2050, was immediately resold to Mr. F. R. Halsey at an advance of $500.

Poe must have had these poems in his portfolio long before he went to the University; some of them he claims to have written when he was ten years old, — consequently when he was a pupil at Dr. Bransby's School. In their crude boyish metres one can feel the dancing Ariel spirit of his mother taking form in verse and reincarnating itself, Morella-like, in the work of the child. The elements of strangeness and beauty were all there; quaintness and witchery echo from "those unusual strings," and the harp of Israfel is already attuning itself to extraordinary harmonies.

The boy of eighteen writes the following Preface: "The greater part of the Poems which compose this little volume were written in the year 1821–22, when the author had not completed his fourteenth year. They were of course not intended for publication; why they are now published concerns no one but himself. Of the smaller pieces very little need be said: they perhaps savour too much of egotism; but they were written by one too young to have any knowledge of the world but from his own breast.

"In 'Tamerlane' he has endeavoured to expose the folly of even *risking* the best feelings of the heart at the shrine of Ambition. He is conscious that in this there are many faults (besides that of the general character of the poem), which he flatters himself he could, with little trouble, have corrected, but unlike many of his predecessors, he has been too fond of his early productions to amend them in his *old age*.

"We will not say that he is indifferent as to the

success of these Poems — it might stimulate him to other attempts — but he can safely assert that failure will not at all influence him in a resolution already adopted. This is challenging criticism — let it be so. *Nos haec novimus esse nihil.*"

This was the first of those defiant Prefaces which all his life after Poe was flinging like gauntlets in the faces of his critics: the attitude of one at bay, even then, in his teens.

> "The soul, which knows such power, will still
> Find *Pride* the ruler of its will —"

a couplet imitated, consciously or unconsciously, by Cardinal Newman in his famous "Lead, Kindly Light" ("Pride ruled my will: remember not past days"). It gives the fundamental note of "Tamerlane," whose vagueness is also Poësque in its Ossianic nebulosity. It is full of Moore and Byron ("the sound of revelry by night" actually occurs imbedded in the text, without quotation-marks); its metre is the ancient octosyllable of Gower and the pre-Chaucerians, as if the lad had unconsciously reverted to ancestral musical conditions; dreams, mysteries, blighted hopes, blasted expectations, visions of the night, terrors and tremblings, well up artificially or otherwise in the boy's imagination and point prophetically — almost mockingly — to his future. A fitful melody, windlike in its aërial waywardness, flits through couplet and stanza and recalls the melodious friction of the air on the strings of a viol: a sigh, a murmuring of the waves, a whispering of parted lips, an elegy breathing from the tremulous pine-tops, could hardly be more faint, sprite-like, poetical than this zephyr-like music, this disembodied passion, these

almost inorganic harmonies that each take a line as an oaten reed and utter silken cadences half song, half soliloquy. This little book is more like some extraordinary child-musician's improvisations than anything else: shell-like murmurings, indefinite, unreal, almost spectral shadows of song here run up and down the keys with their flitting golden tones, now crushing all the wayward sweetness out of a trampled chord, now up and away through the ascending diapason of some chance-struck air, melting into the "choir invisible." Trouble, passion, poignant regret are already there — tumult of soul and body, uneasy visionings, phantasy surcharged with intimations of the supernatural, scorn, contempt, rebellion, angel pride, the "ill demons" of the latter day already foreshadowed in the plaintive susurrus of many a line, occur in "Tamerlane and Other Poems" in the fitful, unsubstantial flickerings of the phantasy of a gifted and unhappy boy who finds himself caught in print — a Swanhilda without her magic raiment — and wails in vain for the recovery of his *incognito*.

Another fact of vital importance for the year 1827 was Poe's enlistment at Boston in the army of the United States under the assumed name of Edgar A. Perry: a fact established by Professor Woodberry through Mr. Robert Lincoln, Secretary of War, and Adjutant-General Drum. This occurred in May, about the time of the publication of the Poems, and opens up one of the most honorable vistas in this short and tragic life. Poe may have been attracted to the army and, afterward, to West Point, from the fact of the University of Virginia having established a system of military drill in 1826, and from the further fact of one of his class-mates, John B. Magruder (afterwards

the well-known Confederate general) having left the University that year for West Point.

"The examination of documents" (says Professor Woodberry, in "The Atlantic Monthly" for December, 1884) "both at Washington and elsewhere has been exhaustive. From these papers it appears that on May 26, 1827, Poe enlisted at Boston in the army of the United States as a private soldier, under the name of Edgar A. Perry. He stated that he was born at Boston, and was by occupation a clerk; and although minors were then accepted into the service, he gave his age as twenty-two years. He had, says the record, gray eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion; was five feet eight inches in height. He was at once assigned to Battery H of the First Artillery, then serving in the harbor at Fort Independence; on October 31 the battery was ordered to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, S. C., and exactly one year later to Fortress Monroe, Virginia. The officers under whom he served are dead, but it appears that he discharged his duties as company clerk and assistant in the commissariat department so as to win the goodwill of his superiors. On January 1, 1829, he was appointed Sergeant-Major, a promotion which, by the invariable custom of the army, was given only for merit. He now made his circumstances known to Mr. Allan, and shortly after Mrs. Allan's death, February 28, 1829, he returned to Richmond on leave of absence. Of this furlough there is no record, but on February 28 he is reported on the rolls as present for duty."

The only discrepancy with the facts in this account is that of his personal appearance: he had black hair and a dark, clear, olive complexion, instead of the "brown hair and fair complexion" of the army description.

This account is further absolutely authenticated by the letters of Colonel James House, Adjutant-General Lowndes, Lieutenant-Colonel Worth, Captain Griswold, and Lieutenant Howard, three of whom were connected with the same regiment and one was commandant of Fortress Monroe.

The most gratifying feature of this discovery is that it not only eliminates from his biography the wild stories about Poe's journey to Europe in the cause of the Greeks, the escapade at St. Petersburg, and the romance of the French duel, novel, etc., but that it unfolds an admirable record of unblemished conduct, prompt and faithful performance of military duties, freedom from bad habits, and the unhesitating recommendation of his superior officers. Lieutenant Howard admiringly writes of his "unexceptionable conduct" and his excellence as a clerk: "his habits are good, and entirely free from drinking."

Captain Griswold testifies that "up to this date" (Jan. 1, 1829), "he has been exemplary in his deportment, prompt and faithful in the discharge of his duties — and is highly worthy of confidence."

Colonel Worth, in command of Fortress Monroe, adds: "I have known and had an opportunity of observing the conduct of the above-mentioned Sergeant-Major Poe some three months during which his deportment has been highly praiseworthy and deserving of confidence. His education is of a very high order and he appears to be free from bad habits, in fact the testimony of Lieutenant Howard and Adjutant Griswold is full to that point. Understanding he is, thro' his friends, an applicant for cadet's warrant, I unhesitatingly recommend him as promising to acquit himself of the obligation of that station studiously and faithfully."

Poe, having according to the army requirements procured a substitute, was honorably discharged from the service April 15, with this splendid record of silent and devoted service testified to by his army associates. The wayward, spoiled, impulsive boy had in two years turned out to be the conscientious, exemplary soldier — a sergeant-major in his twentieth year. It is delightful indeed to substitute these creditable facts for the feverish romance and fabulous gossip of contemporaries who doubtless applied to Poe some of the adventures said to have occurred to his gifted but unfortunate elder brother, William Henry Leonard, who was a cadet in the navy and who died in July, 1831.

Brilliant reminiscences of Poe's service in the army adhere to his South Carolina romance, "The Gold-Bug," to the "Balloon Hoax," and to the humorous "Man that was Used Up."

Through these two eventful years, too, "Al Aaraaf and Minor Poems" was ripening in the young soldier's brain and showing the ideal side of the mechanical routine of the army. These shadowy years have left their crystalline deposit in poems, in which an increasing purpose, a maturer power, a richer and less adumbrated imagination, a finer metrical skill are apparent. Perhaps the precision of the army routine had something to do with the growing precision of Poe's style, a precision which grew on him while he lived and which is sometimes in his more faultless prose almost painful. His intense feeling for rhythm may have been energized by the measured tread of soldiers' feet, the martial regularity of all their movements, the inflexible order of their evolutions, the symmetry of whatever they did.

While the West Point project was maturing in his

mind and purpose, he went to Baltimore, became more fully acquainted with his Maryland kindred, and was introduced to William Gwynn, editor of "The Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser," to whom he showed the MS. of "Al Aaraaf." About this MS. he fell into correspondence with John Neal of Boston, then editor of "The Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette," a man who proved a lifelong friend of the penniless author and who gave him through the columns of "The Yankee" excellent literary advice. The communications between author and editor appeared in the new series, iii. 168, and vi. 295–298, and the journal contains two poems by Poe not hitherto found in any collected edition of his works. One of them is called "The Magician" and is as follows :

THE MAGICIAN.

Magician —

Thou dark, sea-stirring Storm,
Whence comest thou in thy might ?
Nay ; wait, thou dim and weary form,
Storm-spirit, I call thee — 't is mine of right,
Arrest thee in thy troubled flight.

Storm-Spirit —

Thou askest me whence I came, —
I came o'er the sleeping sea ;
It roused at my torrent of storm and flame,
And howled aloud in its agony,
And swelled to the sky — that sleepy sea.

Thou askest me what I met —
A ship from the Indian shore ;

A tall, proud ship with her sails all set,
Far down in the sea that ship I bore
My storm's wild rushing wings before.

And her men will forever lie
Below the unquiet sea ;
And tears will dim full many an eye
Of those who shall widows and orphans be,
And their days be years — for their misery.

A boat with a starving crew,
For hunger they starved and swore,
While the blood from a fellow's veins they drew,
I came upon them with rush and roar —
Far under the waves that boat I bore.

Two ships in a fearful fight,
Where a hundred guns did flash :
I came upon them — no time for flight,
But under the sea their timbers crash,
And over their guns the wild waves dash.

A wretch on a single plank,
And I tossed him on the shore ;
A night and a day of the sea he drank,
But the wearied wretch to the land I bore,
And now he walketh the earth once more.

Magician —
Storm-spirit, go on thy path ! —
The spirit has spread his wings,
And comes on the sea with a rush of wrath,
As a war-horse when he springs ;
And over the earth — nor stop nor stay —
The winds of the Storm King go out on their way.

"Early in 1829" (says Mr. E. L. Didier, in his Biography, p. 39) "we find Poe in Baltimore, with a manuscript volume of verses, which in a few months was published in a thin octavo, bound in boards, crimson sprinkled, with yellow linen back. . . . The Peabody Library of Baltimore has a copy of this rare volume, which I have carefully examined. It numbers seventy-one pages. On the sixth page is the Dedication:

"'Who drinks the deepest? Here's to him.' 'Al Aaraaf' is printed the same as now, except eight unimportant verbal changes. 'Tamerlane,' which is dedicated to John Neal, is preceded by an advertisement, as follows: 'This poem was printed for publication in Boston, in the year 1827, but suppressed through circumstances of a private nature.' There is only one word changed in the whole poem. After 'Tamerlane' follow nine miscellaneous poems, all of which, with the exception of the first and part of the eighth, are in the last editions of Poe's works. The first of these miscellaneous poems consists of four stanzas, and is headed 'To ——.' It has never been reprinted in full, but the third stanza contains the germ of 'A Dream within a Dream.'"

"The book" (adds Mr. Didier) "was printed by Matchett & Woods, who printed the Baltimore City Directory for nearly half a century."

So far from there being "only one word changed" in the "Tamerlane," it was entirely rewritten.

Of "Al Aaraaf" the critics have made a nine days' wonder: its melodious incoherence has left it a jumble of jewelled words that have caught their iridescence partly from Moore and partly from the inconsequence and nebulous radiance of the poet's nascent

fancy. Poe himself says, in his letter to Neal, "'Al Aaraaf'[1] has some good poetry, and much extravagance, which I have not had time to throw away. 'Al Aaraaf' is a tale of another world — the star discovered by Tycho Brahe, which appeared and disappeared so suddenly — or rather, it is no tale at all." It is indeed a tale — with the "tale" left out.

It was unfavorably reviewed by the Baltimore "Minerva and Emerald" edited by J. H. Hewitt and Rufus Dawes, the latter of whom Poe remembered later among those whom he flagellated in "Minor Contemporaries."

[1] "'Al Arâf,' or 'Al Aaraaf,' as the poet preferred styling it, is designed by the Mahommedan imagination as an abode wherein a gentle system of purgatory is instituted for the benefit of those who, though too good for hell, are not fitted for heaven."— Ingram, I., 78.

CHAPTER IV.

1829–1830.

AT WEST POINT. THE POEMS OF 1831.

At the beginning of 1829, the beloved first Mrs. Allan (Miss F. K. Valentine, cousin of the sculptor) died, February 28, leaving Poe bereft of his truest friend. It is said that he reached Richmond the day after her burial, which took place at Shockoe Hill Cemetery, where a fitting memorial stone was erected to her memory by her husband.

Not many months after this Mr. Allan (after addressing Miss Anne Valentine, sister of his deceased wife, and being rejected) was united in marriage, October 5, 1830, to Miss Louisa Gabriella Patterson of New York, of whom the following authentic sketch has been kindly furnished the writer by a member of the lady's family:

"Mrs. Louisa Gabriella Allan was born in the City of New York, March 24, 1800. Her mother was Miss Louisa De Hart, daughter of John De Hart, a member of the Continental Congress of 1774–76 from New Jersey, Attorney-General of his State, a lawyer of great distinction and a man of large means and influence. Her father was Mr. John William Patterson, a lawyer of New York, a son of Capt. John Patterson of the English army who married Catharine Livingston of Livingston Manor, N. Y., and was the

first U. S. Collector of the port of Philadelphia after the Revolution. Mrs. Allan was a niece of Mrs. Col. John Mayo (née De Hart) of Belleville near Richmond, and it was when on a visit to her aunt that she first met Mr. Allan, who became at once very much enamoured with her and subsequently married her at her father's house in New York City, October 5, 1830. Mrs. Allan was a lady of much stateliness and dignity, and of great firmness and decision of character, very clannish in her feelings, and while apparently very calm and reserved in manner, had one of the warmest hearts in the world, was a firm and steadfast friend and profuse in concealed and unostentatious charities. She had three children, all sons — John, William Galt, and Patterson, all of whom died during her life, — John leaving two children, Hoffman Allan now of Danville, Va., and Louisa G., now Mrs. W. R. Pryor of New York. William G. left no issue. Patterson had two children, Genevieve, now Mrs. Dwight Montague, and John, who died young. After her sons became of age Mrs. Allan's house was the centre of Richmond hospitality, and the beauty and frequency of her entertainments were proverbial and few visitors of prominence failed to partake of them, but while the acknowledged leader in society her prominent characteristics were unaltered. She was the fond mother, cherished friend, and quiet dispenser of many charities, not impulsive but constantly flowing, and many a home of her impoverished friends has been blest by her thoughtful consideration and practical affection. Mrs. Allan was of masculine personality and of so much impressiveness and attraction that few who met can forget her ; and though the war had to a great extent swept away her wealth,

and the death of loved ones saddened her life, she yet remained the same lovely, dignified, and respected lady to the end, which occurred April 24, 1881, forty-seven years after the death of her beloved husband, by whose side she now lies in Shockoe Hill Cemetery."

In securing the West Point position — which then commanded a salary of $28 a month, besides subsistence and instruction — Poe was fortunate in obtaining letters from Mr. A. Stevenson, speaker of the House of Representatives, and three eminent Virginians, John Campbell, James P. Preston, and Powhatan Ellis, senator from Mississippi, uncle of Col. Thomas H. Ellis, who furnished us with the interesting recollections in Chapter I. These were supplemented and reinforced by letters from Mr. Allan to Major John Eaton, then Secretary of War.

The appointment was really due to Senator Ellis.

The reason why Mr. Ellis became interested in Poe was that he was a younger brother of Mr. Allan's partner, and Mr. Allan would naturally mention to so influential an acquaintance his desire to get Edgar the appointment. While waiting for the appointment, Poe had passed the legal age of twenty-one; but he did not scruple to report his age as nineteen years and five months.

So July 1, 1830, he entered the Academy at West Point, which had been founded in 1802 and was considered a most desirable opening for a penniless young man on account of the income of $336 (afterwards increased to $540) attached to a cadetship, and the possibility of a rapid rise in the profession. Poe had martial blood in his veins; he had had two years of admirable practical training in the artillery branch of

the service; he was an excellent mathematician and linguist; and there was every reason to hope that he would ultimately attain the rank of his grandfather, Quartermaster-General Poe.

The years 1829 and 1830 were very stirring ones in the ancient Commonwealth of Virginia. In 1829 the famous Convention to revise the Constitution assembled in Richmond, and included among its number more distinguished men than any other public body perhaps that ever assembled in the United States. Among these were ex-presidents Madison and Monroe, Chief Justice Marshall, John Randolph of Roanoke, and a host of other famous Virginians who made the little town ring with their eloquence, and all through the winter of 1829–30 elaborated changes in the Constitution connected with the suffrage and other important questions. The lobbies of the old State-house (planned by Jefferson) and the inns on Main and Broad Streets hummed with voices discussing the momentous questions of statecraft; the streets and private houses were full of historic figures come to lend their aid in settling the vexed questions; and Poe doubtless heard many a voice that had been listened to in Revolutionary times as the Convention proceeded with its order of business. Gentlemen in tie-wigs, knee-buckles, and black stocks were seen everywhere; and it was a resurrection of the olden times.

The atmosphere of West Point was very different from the bland and genial social environment of Richmond with its freedom from restraints, its air of universal bonhomie and relationship — everybody was a "Virginia cousin" to everybody else — its social card-playing, drinking, smoking, and leisurely practice of the professions.

The Academy occupied the site of a ruined fortress captured by the British in the War of Independence, and towered aloft on a plateau nearly two hundred feet above the Hudson in a scene of landscape beauty almost unrivalled. Instead of the social relaxation of Richmond, a rigorous discipline reminded the nearly three hundred young men that there were three hundred offences scheduled for which they could be punished; that they had "signed" for five years as servants of the United States; and that for the four years' course they could hope only for ten weeks' vacation in all. It was even whispered around that less than half of those who hopefully entered on the courses ever graduated.

A remarkable assemblage of young men were gathered at West Point the half-year Poe was there, among them the following:

LIST OF POE'S CONTEMPORARIES AT WEST POINT IN 1830:[1]

[To the names given below, annotated by General Wilson, may be added that of Thomas H. Williamson, Va., many years professor, with Stonewall Jackson and Commodore M. F. Maury, at the Virginia Military Institute: appointed General by the Governor of Virginia.]

Class of 1830, U. S. M. A.

Rev. Francis Vinton, D.D., of Rhode Island. Distinguished clergyman of the P. E. Church. No. 4 in his class. Died in 1872.

[1] This list has been kindly compiled for this work by Cadet W. D. A. Anderson of West Point; and the biographical memoranda have been supplied by General James Grant Wilson to whom thanks are returned for the courtesy.

Rev. W. H. Pendleton, of Va. No. 5 in his class. Became a General in the Confederate Service. Died in 1883.

Brevet Lieut.-Col. John B. Magruder, of Va. Served in the Mexican War, and became a General in the Confederate Army. Died 1871.

Brig.-Gen. Robert C. Buchanan, of Md. Served with distinction in the Mexican and Civil Wars. Died in 1878.

Class of 1831.

Rev. Roswell Park, D.D., of Ct. Distinguished Clergyman, Professor, and Poet. Graduated No. 1 in his class, and resigned from the army in 1835. Died in 1869.

Gen. Jacob Ammen, of Va. (Brig.-Gen. of Vols.). Intimate friend of General Grant. Died in 1894.

Brevet Major-Gen. Andrew A. Humphreys, of Pa. Served in the Mexican and Civil Wars. Chief of Engineer Corps. Died in 1883.

Brevet Major-Gen. W. H. Emory, of Maryland. Died in 1887.

Samuel R. Curtis, of Ohio, Major-Gen. Vols. Died in 1866.

Class of 1832.

President Benjamin S. Ewell, of D. C. Graduated No. 3 in the class. Distinguished General in the Confederate Army. Died in 1894.

Brevet Brig.-Gen. Erasmus D. Keyes, of Mass., Major-Gen. Vols. and Corps Commander Army Potomac. Died in 1895.

Lieut. Tench Tilghman, of Md. Became General in the Confederate Service. Died in 1874.

Lieut.-Col. George B. Crittenden, of Ky., son of U. S. Senator Crittenden. Became General in the Confederate Army. Died in 1880.

Brevet Brig.-Gen. Randolph B. Marcy, of Wash. Inspector-General U. S. Army. Daughter married General McClellan. Died in 1887.

Lieut. Humphrey Marshall, of Ky. Colonel of Kentucky Volunteers in war with Mexico and General in Confederate Army. Died in 1872.

Class of 1833.

Capt. Frederic A. Smith, of Mass. Graduated at the head of his class. Engineer Officer U. S. A. Died in 1842.

Major-General John G. Barnard, of Mass. 2d in the class. Distinguished Engineer Officer in the Civil War and Author of Military Monographs. Died in 1882. Brother of President Barnard of Columbia University.

Brevet Major-Gen. George W. Cullum, of New York. 3d in class. Meritorious Officer of Engineer Corps and military author who left $250,000 for the Cullum Memorial at West Point. Died in 1892.

Brig.-Gen. Rufus King, U. S. V., of New York. 4th in class. Minister to Italy and Journalist. Son of President Charles King of Columbia. Died in 1876.

Colonel Francis H. Smith, of Virginia. 5th in class, Prof. and later Superintendent with rank of General in Virginia Mil. Institute. General in the Confederate Army. Died in 1890.

Brevet Lieut.-Col. William Bliss, of New York. 9th in class. Served in Mexican War. Private Secy. and son-in-law of President Taylor. Died in 1853. (His widow, Mrs. Dandridge, still living.)

Brevet Major-Gen. Edmund Schirer, of Pa. Meritorious Officer during the Civil War. Inspector General U. S. A. Died 1899.

Brevet Major-Gen. Alexander E. Shiras, of Pa. Meritorious Officer Subsistence Dept. U. S. A. Died in 1875.

Brevet Brig.-Gen. Benjamin Alvord, of Vt. Served in the Mexican and Civil Wars. Author of Essays and Reviews. Died in 1884.

Brevet Brig.-Gen. Henry W. Wessells, of Ct. Died in 1889.

Colonel Henry L. Scott, of N. C., son-in-law of Gen. Winfield Scott. Died in 1886.

Brevet Lieut.-Col. Daniel Ruggles, of Mass. Served in Mexican War, and General in the Confederate Army. Died in 1897.

Just as in the case of Poe's contemporaries at the University of Virginia we find him here at West Point thrown with the best blood of the country: General Robert E. Lee had graduated the year before, and a long line of illustrious soldiers and statesmen followed the mercurial poet. Unfortunately, Poe soon began to chafe under the discipline, though he stood high and well in his classes: third in French and seventeenth in mathematics, in a class of eighty-seven. One of his contemporaries there indeed writes: "He was an accomplished French scholar, and had a wonderful aptitude for mathematics, so that he had no difficulty in preparing his recitations in his class and in obtaining the highest marks in these departments. He was a devourer of books, but his great fault was his neglect of and apparent contempt for military duties. His wayward and capricious temper made him at times

utterly oblivious or indifferent to the ordinary routine of roll-calls, drills, and guard duties. These habits subjected him often to arrest and punishment, and effectually prevented his learning or discharging the duties of a soldier." [1]

In what singular contrast *this* Poe is to the honorably discharged United States soldier who distinguished himself for two years by the most exemplary conduct!

The only explanation is that either Poe and Perry were different beings or that Poe's "Imp of the Perverse" was now in the ascendant, and that, learning in October of Mr. Allan's second marriage, he went to work deliberately to undo his excellent record and get himself, by insubordination and neglect of duty, courtmartialled and expelled from the Academy, with a view to pursuing a literary career.

"Harper's Magazine" for November, 1867, contains some highly colored though not incredible accounts of "Poe at West Point," written thirty-seven years after the events by Mr. T. H. Gibson:

"Number 28 South Barracks, in the last months of the year of our Lord 1830, was pretty generally regarded as a hard room. Cadets who aspired to high standing on the Merit Roll were not much given to visiting it, at least in daytime. To compensate in some measure for this neglect, however, the inspecting officer was uncommonly punctual in his visits, and rarely failed to find some object for his daily report of demerit. The old barracks have passed away, and are now only a dream of stone and mortar; but the records of the sins of omission and commission of Number 28 and its occupants remain, and are filed

[1] A. B. Magruder to Professor Woodberry: Life, p. 55.

carefully away among the dusty archives of the Academy.

"Edgar A. Poe was one of the occupants of the room. 'Old P——' and the writer of this sketch completed the household. The first conversation I had with Poe after we became installed as room-mates was characteristic of the man. A volume of Campbell's Poems was lying upon our table, and he tossed it contemptuously aside, with the curt remark: 'Campbell is a plagiarist;' then without waiting for a reply he picked up the book, and turned the leaves over rapidly until he found the passage he was looking for.

"'There,' said he, 'is a line more often quoted than any other passage of his: "Like angel visits few and far between," and he stole it bodily from Blair's "Grave." Not satisfied with the theft, he has spoiled it in the effort to disguise it. Blair wrote: "Like angel visits SHORT and far between." Campbell's "Few and far between" is mere tautology.'

"Poe at that time, though only about twenty years of age, had the appearance of being much older. He had a worn, weary, discontented look, not easily forgotten by those who were intimate with him. Poe was easily fretted by any jest at his expense, and was not a little annoyed by a story that some of the class got up, to the effect that he had procured a cadet's appointment for his son, and the boy having died, the father had substituted himself in his place. Another report current in the corps was that he was a grandson of Benedict Arnold. Some good-natured friend told him of it, and Poe did not contradict it, but seemed rather pleased than otherwise at the mistake.

"Very early in his brief career at the Point he established a high reputation for genius, and poems and

squibs of local interest were daily issued from Number 28 and went the round of the classes. One of the first things of the kind that he perpetrated was a diatribe in which all of the officers of the Academy, from Colonel Thayer down, were duly if not favorably noticed. I can recall but one stanza. It ran thus :

> "'John Locke was a very great name;
> Joe Locke was a greater in short;
> The former was well known to Fame,
> The latter well known to Report.'

"Joe Locke, it may be remarked by way of explanation, was one of the instructors of tactics, and *ex-officio* Inspector of Barracks, and supervisor of the morals and deportment of cadets generally. In this capacity it was his duty to report to head-quarters every violation of the regulations falling under his observation ; a duty in which he was in nowise remiss, as the occupants of Number 28 could severally testify.

"The studies of the Academy Poe utterly ignored. I doubt if he ever studied a page of Lacroix, unless it was to glance hastily over it in the lecture-room, while others of his section were reciting. It was evident from the first that he had no intention of going through with the course, and both the Professors and Cadets of the older classes had set him down for a 'January colt' before the corps had been in barracks a week.

"Poe disappointed them, however, for he did not remain until the January examination, that *pons asinorum* of *plebe* life at West Point. He resigned, I think, early in December, having been a member of the corps a little over five months.

"Some month or two after he had left, it was announced that a volume of his poems would be pub-

lished by subscription, at the price of two dollars and fifty cents per copy. Permission was granted by Colonel Thayer to the corps to subscribe for the book, and as no cadet was ever known to neglect any opportunity of spending his pay, the subscription was pretty nearly universal. The book was received with a general expression of disgust. It was a puny volume, of about fifty pages, bound in boards and badly printed on coarse paper, and worse than all, it contained not one of the squibs and satires upon which his reputation at the Academy had been built up. Few of the poems contained in that collection now appear in any of the editions of his works, and such as have been preserved have been very much altered for the better.

"For months afterward quotations from Poe formed the standing material for jests in the corps, and his reputation for genius went down at once to zero. I doubt if even the 'Raven' of his after years ever entirely effaced from the minds of his class the impression received from that volume.

"The unfortunate habit that proved the bane of his after-life had even at that time taken strong hold upon him, and Number 28 was seldom without a bottle of Benny Haven's best brandy. I don't think he was ever intoxicated while at the Academy, but he had already acquired the more dangerous habit of constant drinking.

"Keeping up the communications with our base of supplies at 'Old Benny's' was one of the problems that occupied a good deal more of our thoughts than any of the propositions in Legendre; but, upon the whole, this branch of the commissary department of Number 28 was a success; and many a thirsty soul, with not enough of pluck to run the blockade himself,

would steal into our room between tattoo and taps to try the merits of the last importation.

"The result of one of these foraging parties after supplies created for a time no little excitement in the South Barracks. People had been burned and hung in effigy, from time immemorial, but it was reserved for Number 28 to witness the eating of a Professor in effigy.

"It was a dark, cold, drizzling night, in the last days of November, when this event came off. The brandy bottle had been empty for two days, and just at dusk Poe proposed that we should draw straws — the one who drew the shortest to go down to Old Benny's and replenish our stock. The straws were drawn, and the lot fell on me.

"Provided with four pounds of candles and Poe's last blanket, for traffic (silver and gold we had not, but such as we had we gave unto Benny), I started just as the bugle sounded to quarters. It was a rough road to travel, but I knew every foot of it by night or day, and reached my place of destination in safety, but drenched to the skin. Old Benny was not in the best of humors that evening. Candles and blankets and regulation shoes, and similar articles of traffic, had accumulated largely on his hands, and the market for them was dull in that neighborhood. His chicken suppers and bottles of brandy had disappeared very rapidly of late, and he had received little or no money in return.

"At last, however, I succeeded in exchanging the candles and blanket for a bottle of brandy and the hardest-featured, loudest-voiced old gander that it has ever been my lot to encounter. To chop the bird's head off before venturing into barracks with him was

a matter of pure necessity ; and thus, in fact, old Benny rendered him before delivery. I reached the suburbs of the barracks about nine o'clock. The bottle had not as much brandy in it as when I left Old Benny's ; but I was very confident I had not spilled any. I had carried the gander first over one shoulder and then over the other, and the consequence was that not only my shirt front, but my face and hands were as bloody as the entire contents of the old gander's veins and arteries could well make them.

" Poe was on the lookout, and met me some distance from the barracks, and my appearance at once inspired him with the idea of a grand hoax. Our plans were perfected in an instant. The gander was tied, neck and feet and wings together, and the bloody feathers bristling in every direction gave it a nondescript appearance that would have defined recognition as a gander by the most astute naturalist on the Continent. Poe took charge of the bottle, and preceded me to the room. ' Old P.' was puzzling his brains over the binomial theorem, and a visitor from the North Barracks was in the room awaiting the result of my expedition.

" Poe had taken his seat, and pretended to be absorbed in the mysteries of ' Leçons Françaises.' Laying the gander down at the outside of the door, I walked or rather staggered into the room, pretending to be very drunk, and exhibiting in clothes and face a spectacle not often seen off the stage. ' My God ! what has happened ? ' exclaimed Poe, with well-acted horror.

" ' Old K——, old K—— ! ' I repeated several times, and with gestures intended to be particularly savage.

"'Well, what of him?' asked Poe.

"'He won't stop me on the road any more!' and I produced a large knife that we had stained with the few drops of blood that remained in the old gander. 'I have killed him!'

"'Nonsense!' said Poe, 'you are only trying one of your tricks on us.'

"'I did n't suppose you would believe me,' I replied; 'so I cut off his head and brought it into barracks. Here it is!' and reaching out of the door I caught the gander by the legs, and giving it one fearful swing around my head dashed it at the only candle in the room, and left them all in darkness with what two of them believed to be the head of one of the Professors. The visitor leaped through the window and alighted in the slop-tub, and made fast time for his own room in the North Barracks — spreading, as he went, the report that I had killed old K——, and that his head was then in Number 28. The story gained ready credence, and for a time the excitement in barracks ran high. When we lit the candle again, 'Old P——' was sitting in one corner, a blank picture of horror, and it was some time before we could restore him to reason.

"The gander was skinned — picking the feathers off was out of the question — and after taps we cut him up in small pieces, and cooked him in a tin wash-basin, over an anthracite fire, without seasoning of any kind. It was perhaps the hardest supper on record, but we went through with it without flinching. We had set out to eat old K—— in effigy, and we did it; whether he ever learned of the honors we paid him that night I never learned.

"Upon the whole the impression left by Poe in his

short career at West Point was highly favorable to him. If he made no fast friends, he left no enemies behind him. But up to that time he had given no indications of the genius which has since secured for him a world-wide fame. His acquaintance with English literature was extensive and accurate, and his verbal memory wonderful. He would repeat both prose and poetry by the hour, and seldom or never repeated the same passage twice to the same audience.

"The whole bent of his mind at that time seemed to be toward criticism — or, more properly speaking, caviling. Whether it were Shakspeare or Byron, Addison or Johnson — the acknowledged classic or the latest poetaster — all came in alike for his critical censure. He seemed to take especial delight in caviling at passages that had received the most unequivocal stamp of general approval. I never heard him speak in terms of praise of any English writer, living or dead. I never met him after he left the Academy in December, 1830; and hence my recollections and impressions of him are wholly uninfluenced by his after-life."

He was courtmartialled and dismissed from the Academy for disobedience to orders and absence from roll-calls, guard-duty, and class-work, the sentence taking effect March 6, 1831.

This third crisis-point of his career was signalized by a third volume of Poems, published by Elam Bliss of New York and subscribed to, at seventy-five cents a copy, by his fellow-cadets. They, supposing the volume to contain squibs and pasquinades, satires and jokes against the professors, were, it is said, egregiously disappointed on receiving the volume, to find it contained only — "Israfel," "To Helen," "Lenore" (in its first version), "The Sleeper," "The Valley of Unrest," and other masterpieces!

Guffaws of amazement received this third venture of "Gaffy" Poe, according to General Cullum, who instead of using the marvellous *tambour* of Heine's Monsieur Le Grand to convey his meaning to the world, had simply picked up a golden strand from Israfel's harp and strung it in the world's window.

The Dedication read:

To the U. S. Corps of Cadets
This Volume
is
Respectfully Dedicated.

Then follows, a few pages later, the long and rambling "Letter to Mr. —— ——," afterwards reprinted in the "Southern Literary Messenger" for July, 1836, and containing Poe's peculiar views of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Lake School. This is followed by the following eleven poems: Introduction ("Romance, who loves to nod and sing"), "To Helen," "Israfel," "The Doomed City," "Fairy Land," "Irene," "A Pæan," "The Valley Nis;" "Al Aaraaf," Parts i and ii, Sonnet ("Science"), "Tamerlane:" in all one hundred and twenty-four duodecimo pages, in green boards.

Nearly all the rubbish of the earlier volumes has been dropped: "the trash shaken from them in which they were embedded," says Poe in the prefatory letter to "Dear B——." The sculptor is busy hewing away at the marble — the brilliant chips flying — and drawing forth the delicate imprisoned image from the enveloping chalk. In three years a wonderful gain in precision, definiteness, lucidity, music, has taken place. What before was as uncertain as a choir of whispering

reeds along a river's marge, as vague as the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of the footfalls of the wandering winds at night, has gathered itself into focal form and becomes incarnate in the stanzas of "Helen" and "Israfel." The poet of twenty-one is still awkward, clumsy, stumbling in rhyme and metre, a 'prentice in the niceties of verse, yet haunted by inexpressible verbal melodies, as voluptuous as Spenser in the rippling flow of some lines, as *gauche* as Whitman in the hiatuses of others. The volume of 1831 is the visible parturition of a great poet whose complete birth will require fifteen years more. The increasing delicacy of perception and feeling, the sentiment of the magical beauty of the world, and of its mystery, the consciousness of the harmonies that well up from mere words in their vowel and consonantal combinations and contrasts, the poetry that there is in Death, in Doom, in Sorrow, in Sin (carried to an extreme by his admirer and imitator, Baudelaire, in his "Fleurs du Mal")— all haunt this plastic young imagination with their soft and vivid blandishments and blow their triton-horns in his subtle ear, enticing to new and sometimes happier fields.

"Second edition" on the title-page of this little work means that this volume was regarded by its author as the book of 1829 with some things left out. His statement is: "Believing only a portion of my former volume to be worthy a second edition — that small portion I thought it as well to include in the present book as to republish by itself. I have therefore herein combined 'Al Aaraaf' and 'Tamerlane' with other Poems hitherto unprinted."

The "other Poems hitherto unprinted" must be the product of the year 1830, in between the 1829 and the 1831 volumes, and they are perhaps the only

poems of this period that will live — the eight beautiful minor poems of the collection composed either at West Point between July 1, 1830, and January 1, 1831, or during that period and the preceding six months when the poet was idle and waiting for his cadet's commission. Viewed in this light, the "Pæan" may be in its first draft a memorial dirge in memory of the first Mrs. Allan. All accounts say that the two were very fond of each other, and the poem brims with a heartfelt feeling that no mere fictitious incident could have inspired.

Just the year before Tennyson had published "Poems chiefly Lyrical," and certainly this collection contains nothing of finer edge or dreamier grace than Poe's work, which was contemporary with it; while for 1829 Poe's "Al Aaraaf" may certainly compare favorably with Tennyson's prize-poem "Timbuctoo," of the same year.

CHAPTER V.

1831–1836.

THE DARK YEARS. THE BALTIMORE "VISITER" AND LATROBE'S REMINISCENCES. MARRIAGE.

It is at this point — from March, 1831 to the summer of 1833 — that Poe's biography slips within the *penumbra* of almost total obscurity. Now, if at all, occurred those wanderings of the new Odysseus of which Burwell, Mrs. Shelton, Mr. Ingram, even Mrs. Allan (in her letter to Colonel T. H. Ellis) speak — the Russian journey, the French adventure, etc., the former of which Poe left uncontradicted in Hirst's biography of him, the latter he is reported to have related to Mrs. Marie Louise Shew in a supposed deathbed confession. A hiatus of two years and a half occurred during which the only glimmering of light is afforded by a letter from Poe to William Gwynn, a Baltimore editor, dated May 6th, 1831, referring to Mr. Allan's second marriage, and to Poe's own foolish conduct on a former occasion, and asking for employment of some kind, "salary a minor consideration." None seems to have been forthcoming, nor could Mr. N. C. Brooks (afterwards well known as an editor and *littérateur*) procure him even an usher's place in his school.

Another glimmer proceeds from a paper in "Harper's" for March, 1889, entitled "Poe's Mary," by Augustus van Cleef, according to which Poe spent

the year immediately following his dismissal from West Point, with his aunt Mrs. Clemm, in Baltimore. If one can credit the statements of this paper, which purport to be the story of Poe's love for a Baltimore girl of that time, the poet had just returned from the Academy, was a handsome, fascinating young man who "wrote poetry." "Any young girl would have fallen in love with him" — and "Poe's Mary" did. "Mr. Poe," Mary continues, "was about five feet eight inches tall, and had dark, almost black hair, which he wore long and brushed back in student style over his ears. It was as fine as silk. His eyes were large and full, gray and piercing. He was then, I think, entirely clean shaven. His nose was long and straight, and his features finely cut. The expression about his mouth was beautiful. He was pale and had no color. His skin was of a clear, beautiful olive. He had a sad, melancholy look. He was very slender when I first knew him, but had a fine figure, an erect, military carriage, and a quick step. But it was his manner that most charmed. It was elegant. When he looked at you it seemed as if he could read your very thoughts. His voice was pleasant and musical, but not deep." Colonel T. W. Higginson, many years later, hearing Poe read "Ligeia," bore testimony to the beauty of his voice.

The confession of "Mary" bears internal evidence of being true. She describes his dress, his originality, his affectionate, even passionate manner in his addresses, his *hauteur*, aristocratic manners, and reserve. Excitable, jealous, intense, tender, the sensitive youth appears before us in these pages just as he must have been. Little Virginia Clemm carried the notes that passed to and fro between the lovers, — a lovely, violet-

eyed school-girl of ten who even then loved her cousin to distraction. He proposed marriage to "Mary," but his penniless condition stood in the way of the match.

Finally, the inevitable lovers' quarrel took place, brought on by jealousy of a supposed rival and by chance indulgence with some West Point cadets in a glass of wine. "A glass made him tipsy. As to his being a habitual drunkard, he never was as long as I knew him" [and this lady sat beside Virginia's deathbed in 1847].

All intercourse was then broken off by the *inamorata*, who left his letters unanswered or returned them. Poe then wrote her satirical notelets and published a poem "To Mary ——" in a Baltimore paper, dealing severely with her fickleness and inconstancy. This brought about a personal difficulty between Poe and the lady's uncle, during which Poe drew a cowhide and chastised the old gentleman; afterwards pulling the cowhide out of his sleeve, and throwing it passionately to the feet of his beloved, exclaiming: "There, I make you a present of that!"

The lady afterwards married another, lived in Philadelphia and New York, visited the Poes at Fordham and in Amity Street, and died in the West in 1887.

The article is rambling and erroneous in some of its statements, but is evidently inspired by a real acquaintance with Poe in his earlier years. A search in the contemporary Baltimore papers for the poem might throw additional light on its authenticity.

Whether Poe went to Richmond during this dark period or received any help from the Allans is altogether problematical. A vivid gleam of light, however, is thrown upon his career by the famous competition of

the summer of 1833, when "The Baltimore Visiter" announced that it would give two prizes, one, of a hundred dollars, for the best story, another, of fifty dollars, for the best poem to be published in its columns by a given date. The committee of award was composed of three distinguished Baltimore gentlemen: John P. Kennedy, J. H. B. Latrobe, and Dr. James H. Miller; and the contest was so interesting that it is worth while giving an account of it in Mr. Latrobe's own words, many years afterwards, on the occasion of the unveiling of the Poe Monument in Baltimore, in 1875.

"The Saturday Visiter" was a weekly paper whose origin has been entertainingly described by L. A. Wilmer in "Our Press Gang, or The Crimes of the American Newspapers: 1859." This new literary weekly had been established by Mr. C. F. Cloud (not by Wilmer, as asserted by Professor Woodberry), who placed the editorial management in Mr. Wilmer's charge and afterwards associated Mr. W. P. Pouder, his brother-in-law, and Mr. Hewitt, a musician and poet, with the enterprise. The weekly throve beyond all expectations and would, doubtless, have proved a decided success had not the editors fallen out, dissolved partnership, and lampooned each other. It then passed into the hands of T. S. Arthur, who subsequently transferred it to Dr. J. E. Snodgrass, Poe's physician-friend. Shortly afterwards it expired.

Wilmer, in this curious book, bears the following testimony to Poe's character:

"The late Edgar A. Poe has been represented by the American newspapers in general as a reckless libertine and a confirmed inebriate. I do not recognize him by this description, though I was intimately ac-

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quainted with the man, and had every opportunity to study his character. I have been in company with him every day for many months together; and, within a period of twelve years, I did not see him inebriated; no, not in a single instance. I do not believe that he was ever habitually intemperate until he was made so by grief and many bitter disappointments. And, with respect to the charge of libertinism, I have similar testimony to offer. Of all men that I ever knew, he was the most *passionless;* and I appeal to his writings for a confirmation of this report. Poets of ardent temperament, such as Anacreon, Ovid, Byron, and Tom Moore, will always display their constitutional peculiarity in their literary compositions; but Edgar A. Poe never wrote a line that gave expression to a libidinous thought. The female creations of his fancy are all either statues or angels. His conversation, at all times, was as chaste as that of a vestal, and his conduct, while I knew him, was correspondingly blameless.

"Poe, during his lifetime, was feared and hated by many newspaper editors and other literary animalcules, some of whom, or their friends, had been the subject of his searching critiques; and others disliked him, naturally enough, because he was a man of superior intellect. While he lived, these resentful gentlemen were discreetly silent, but they nursed their wrath to keep it warm, and the first intelligence of his death was the signal for a general onslaught. The primal slander against the deceased bard was published in a leading journal of Philadelphia, the 'literary editor' of which had formerly received not only a critical rebuke, but something like personal chastisement also from the hands of the departed poet." [1]

[1] Our Press Gang, pp. 243–5.

In spite of the large circulation of "The Baltimore Visiter," not a single file of it is known to exist. The attention of rare-book hunters might well be called to the value of the unique number (October 12) in which the "MS. Found in a Bottle" appeared, as well as to that of the other numbers to which, for six months, Poe is said to have contributed.

The announcement of his winning of the prize at once surrounded Poe with a blaze of publicity, in which, afterwards, he never ceased to live. He had emerged out of the *penumbra* into the full light of day, a vexatious apocalypse which enabled the critics to turn their microscopes upon him and subject his every thought, attitude, and gesture to minute investigation. The vivisection has gone on for three-quarters of a century, while the "subject" lies in a haunted sleep, and mutters anathemas against the anatomists!

The "Visiter" of October 12, 1833, contained the following notice:

"Amongst the prose articles [submitted for the prize] were many of various and distinguished merit, but the singular force and beauty of those sent by the author of 'The Tales of the Folio Club' leave us no room for hesitation in that department. We have accordingly awarded the premium to a tale entitled 'The MS. Found in a Bottle.' It would hardly be doing justice to the writer of this collection to say that the tale we have chosen is the best of the six offered by him. We cannot refrain from saying that the author owes it to his own reputation, as well as to the gratification of the community, to publish the entire volume ['Tales of the Folio Club']. These tales are eminently distinguished by a wild, vigorous, and poetical

imagination, a rich style, a fertile invention, and varied and curious learning.

"(Signed) JOHN P. KENNEDY,
J. H. B. LATROBE,
JAMES H. MILLER."

How this tale came to be selected may be seen from the [1] Reminiscences of Poe by John H. B. Latrobe:

"About the year 1833 there was a newspaper in Baltimore called 'The Saturday Visiter' — an ephemeral publication, that aimed at amusing its readers with light literary productions rather than the news of the day. One of its efforts was to procure original tales, and to this end it offered on this occasion two prizes, one for the best story and the other for the best short poem — one hundred dollars for the first and fifty for the last. The judges appointed by the editor of the 'Visiter' were the late John P. Kennedy, Dr. James H. Miller (now deceased), and myself, and accordingly we met, one pleasant afternoon, in the back parlor of my house, on Mulberry Street, and seated round a table garnished with some old wine and some good cigars, commenced our critical labors. As I happened then to be the youngest of the three, I was required to open the packages of prose and poetry, respectively, and read the contents. Alongside of me was a basket to hold what we might reject.

"I remember well that the first production taken from the top of the prose pile was in a woman's hand, written very distinctly, as, indeed, were all the articles submitted, and so neatly that it seemed a pity not to

[1] Edgar Allan Poe Memorial Volume. By Sara Sigourney Rice. Baltimore: Turnbull Brothers: 1877.

award to it a prize. It was ruthlessly criticised, however, for it was ridiculously bad — namby-pamby in the extreme — full of sentiment and of the school known as the Laura Matilda school. The first page would have consigned it to the basket as our critical guillotine beheaded it. Gallantry, however, caused it to be read through, when in it went along with the envelope containing the name of the writer, which, of course, remained unknown. The next piece I have no recollection of, except that a dozen lines consigned it to the basket. I remember that the third, perhaps the fourth, production was recognized as a translation from the French, with a terrific *dénouement*. It was a poor translation too; for, falling into literal accuracy, the writer had, in many places, followed the French idioms. The story was not without merit, but the Sir Fretful Plagiary of a translator deserved the charge of Sheridan in the 'Critic,' of being like a beggar who had stolen another man's child and clothed it in his own rags. Of the remaining productions I have no recollection. Some were condemned after a few sentences had been read. Some were laid aside for reconsideration — not many. These last failed to pass muster afterwards, and the committee had about made up their minds that there was nothing before them to which they would award a prize, when I noticed a small quarto-bound book that had until then accidentally escaped attention, possibly because so unlike, externally, the bundles of manuscript that it had to compete with. Opening it, an envelope with a motto corresponding with one in the book appeared, and we found that our prose examination was still incomplete. Instead of the common cursive manuscript, the writing was in Roman characters — an imitation of printing.

I remember that while reading the first page to myself, Mr. Kennedy and the Doctor had filled their glasses and lit their cigars, and when I said that we seemed at last to have a prospect of awarding the prize, they laughed as though they doubted it, and settled themselves in their comfortable chairs as I began to read. I had not proceeded far before my colleagues became as much interested as myself. The first tale finished, I went to the second, then to the next, and did not stop until I had gone through the volume, interrupted only by such exclamations as 'capital!' 'excellent!' 'how odd!' and the like, from my companions. There was genius in everything they listened to; there was no uncertain grammar, no feeble phraseology, no ill-placed punctuation, no worn-out truisms, no strong thought elaborated into weakness. Logic and imagination were combined in rare consistency. Sometimes the writer created in his mind a world of his own and then described it — a world so weird, so strange —

> "'Far down by the dim lake of Auber,
> In the misty mid-region of Wier;
> Far down by the dank tarn of Auber,
> In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir;'

and withal so fascinating, so wonderfully graphic, that it seemed for the moment to have all the truth of a reality. There was an analysis of complicated facts — an unravelling of circumstantial evidence that won the lawyer judges — an amount of accurate scientific knowledge that charmed their accomplished colleague — a pure classic diction that delighted all three.

"When the reading was completed there was a difficulty of choice. Portions of the tales were read again,

and finally the committee selected "A MS. Found in a Bottle." One of the series was called "A Descent into the Maelström," and this was at one time preferred.[1] I cannot now recall the names of all the tales — there must have been six or eight — but all the circumstances of the selection ultimately made have been so often since referred to in conversation that my memory has been kept fresh, and I see my fellow-judges over their wine and cigars, in their easy-chairs — both genial, hearty men, in pleasant mood, as distinctly now as though I were describing an event of yesterday.

"Having made the selection and awarded the one hundred dollar prize, not, as has been said, most unjustly and ill-naturedly, because the manuscript was legible, but because of the unquestionable genius and great originality of the writer, we were at liberty to open the envelope that identified him, and there we found in the note, whose motto corresponded with that of the little volume, the name, which I see you anticipate, of Edgar Allan Poe.

"The statement in Dr. Griswold's life prefixed to the common edition of Poe's works, that 'It was unanimously decided by the committee that the prize should be given to the first genius who had written legibly; not another MS. was unfolded,' is absolutely untrue.

"Refreshed by this most unexpected change in the character of the contributions, the committee refilled their glasses and relit their cigars, and the reader began upon the poetry. This, although better in the main

[1] This at once establishes the fact that "A Descent into the Maelström" was one of the sixteen "Tales of the Folio Club," and enables us to correct Professor Woodberry's statement (Poe's Works, IV., p. 283) that the "sixteenth Tale is unidentified."

than the prose, was bad enough, and, when we had gone more or less thoroughly over the pile of manuscript, two pieces only were deemed worthy of consideration. The title of one was 'The Coliseum,' the written printing of which told that it was Poe's. The title of the other I have forgotten, but, upon opening the accompanying envelope, we found that the author was Mr. John H. Hewitt, still living in Baltimore, and well known, I believe, in the musical world, both as a poet and composer. I am not prepared to say that the committee may not have been biased in awarding the fifty dollar prize to Mr. Hewitt by the fact that they had already given the one hundred dollar prize to Mr. Poe. I recollect, however, that we agreed that, under the circumstances, the excellence of Mr. Hewitt's poem deserved a reward, and we gave the smaller prize to him with clear consciences.

"I believe that up to this time not one of the committee had ever seen Mr. Poe, and it is my impression that I was the only one that ever heard of him. When his name was read I remembered that on one occasion Mr. William Gwynn, a prominent member of the bar of Baltimore, had shown me the very neat manuscript of a poem called 'Al Aaraaf,' which he spoke of as indicative of a tendency to anything but the business of matter-of-fact life. Those of my hearers who are familiar with the poet's works will recollect it as one of his earlier productions. Although Mr. Gwynn, being an admirable lawyer, was noted as the author of wise and witty epigrams in verse, 'Al Aaraaf' was not in his vein, and what he said of the writer had not prepared me for the productions before the committee. His name, I am sure, was not at the time a familiar one.

"'The next number of the 'Saturday Visiter' contained the 'MS. Found in a Bottle,' and announced the author. My office, in these days, was in the building still occupied by the Mechanics' Bank, and I was seated at my desk on the Monday following the publication of the tale, when a gentleman entered and introduced himself as the writer, saying that he came to thank me, as one of the committee, for the award in his favor. Of this interview, the only one I ever had with Mr. Poe, my recollection is very distinct indeed, and it requires but a small effort of imagination to place him before me now, as plainly almost as I see any one of my audience. He was, if anything, below the middle size, and yet could not be described as a small man. His figure was remarkably good, and he carried himself erect and well, as one who had been trained to it. He was dressed in black, and his frock-coat was buttoned to the throat, where it met the black stock, then almost universally worn. Not a particle of white was visible. Coat, hat, boots, and gloves had very evidently seen their best days, but so far as mending and brushing go, everything had been done, apparently, to make them presentable. On most men his clothes would have looked shabby and seedy, but there was something about this man that prevented one from criticising his garments, and the details I have mentioned were only recalled afterwards. The impression made, however, was that the award in Mr. Poe's favor was not inopportune. *Gentleman* was written all over him. His manner was easy and quiet, and although he came to return thanks for what he regarded as deserving them, there was nothing obsequious in what he said or did. His features I am unable to describe in detail. His forehead was high,

and remarkable for the great development at the temple. This was the characteristic of his head, which you noticed at once, and which I have never forgotten. The expression of his face was grave, almost sad, except when he was engaged in conversation, when it became animated and changeable. His voice, I remember, was very pleasing in its tone and well modulated, almost rhythmical, and his words were well chosen and unhesitating. Taking a seat, we conversed a while on ordinary topics, and he informed me that Mr. Kennedy, my colleague in the committee, on whom he had already called, had either given, or promised to give him, a letter to the 'Southern Literary Messenger,' which he hoped would procure him employment.[1] I asked him whether he was then occupied with any literary labor. He replied that he was engaged on a voyage to the moon, and at once went into a somewhat learned disquisition upon the laws of gravity, the height of the earth's atmosphere, and the capacities of balloons, warming in his speech as he proceeded. Presently, speaking in the first person, he began the voyage: after describing the preliminary arrangements, as you will find them set forth in one of his tales, called 'The Adventure of One Hans Pfaall,' and leaving the earth, and becoming more and more animated, he described his sensation, as he ascended higher and higher, until, at last, he reached the point in space where the moon's attraction overcame that of the earth, when there was a sudden bouleversement of the car and a great confusion among its tenants. By this time the speaker had become so

[1] There is some confusion of dates here: the *Messenger* was not established until August, 1834, nearly ten months after this interview. — Ed.

excited, spoke so rapidly, gesticulating much, that when the turn up-side-down took place, and he clapped his hands and stamped with his foot by way of emphasis, I was carried along with him, and, for aught to the contrary that I now remember, may have fancied myself the companion of his aërial journey. The climax of the tale was the reversal I have mentioned. When he had finished his description he apologized for his excitability, which he laughed at himself. The conversation then turned upon other subjects, and soon afterward he took his leave. I never saw him more. Dr. Griswold's statement 'that Mr. Kennedy accompanied him (Poe) to a clothing store and purchased for him a respectable suit, with a change of linen, and sent him to a bath,' is a sheer fabrication.

"That I heard of him again and again, and year after year, in common with all English-speaking people, more and more, it is unnecessary to say — heard of him in terms of praise sometimes, sometimes in terms of censure, as we all have done, until now, that he has passed away, leaving his fame behind him, to last while our language lasts, I have grown to think of him only as the author who gave to the world the 'Raven' and the 'Bells,' and many a gem beside of noble verse; who illustrated that power of the English tongue in prose composition not less logical than imaginative; and I forget the abuse, whether with or without foundation, that ignorance, prejudice, or envy has heaped upon his memory. Unfortunately in the first biography following his death, where the author, with a temper difficult to understand, actually seemed to enjoy the depreciation of the poet's life, Edgar Allan Poe was seen by a malignant eye, and

his story was told by an unkindly tongue; and the efforts since made by friends to do him justice are slowly succeeding in demonstrating that there was in him an amount of good which, in all fairness, should be set off against that which we must regret while we attempt to palliate.

"To Poe, there well may be applied the verse of one of the most gifted of our poetesses, addressed to a great name in a very different sphere:

> "'The moss upon thy memory, no!
> Not while one note is sung
> Of those divine, immortal lays
> Milton and Shakspeare sung;
> Not till the gloom of night enshroud
> The Anglo-Saxon tongue.'"

Poe of course became the talk of the town. Mr. Kennedy (author of "Swallow Barn," recently published, and, later, of "Horse-Shoe Robinson," and other works) immediately interested himself in the forlorn young genius, invited him to dinner, gave him clothing and free access to his house and table, and "brought him up," as he records in his diary, "from the very verge of despair."

In a letter often quoted, but which never loses its intense pathos, Poe wrote to Kennedy at this time:

"Your invitation to dinner has wounded me to the quick. I cannot come for reasons of the most humiliating nature — my personal appearance. You may imagine my mortification in making this disclosure to you, but it is necessary."

The other judges also, Messrs. Latrobe and Miller, were kind to him, and he sustained himself precari-

WILLIAM CLEMM, FATHER OF VIRGINIA POE.

From a daguerreotype in the possession of Edgar A. Poe.

ously by "jobs" for the "Visiter," and for Mr. Kennedy. Wilmer was his frequent companion in walks and talks about the suburbs, and testifies, as we have noted, to his good conduct. He was living with his aunt Mrs. Clemm, who had married a widower, William Clemm, with a son and a daughter. The lady is said to have supported herself by teaching and dressmaking, and to have resided first in Wilkes Street and then at No. 3 Amity Street, Baltimore. There is no reason to doubt Poe's statement that the "MS. Found in a Bottle" was written and "Politian" already begun, in 1831.

We now approach one of the most vexed and obscure controversies of Poe's vexed existence — his rupture with the Allans. We are fortunately enabled for the first time to give an authentic statement of the events from a member of the Allan family, giving the Allan version of the affair.

Mr. Allan died of dropsy March 27, 1834. Three children had been born to him by the second marriage, and the birth of these children had of course been a death-blow to Poe's hopes of becoming Mr. Allan's heir. Still some lingering expectation of one kind or another must have haunted the poet's brain, for while Mr. Allan was ill he appeared in Richmond and went to the house, having been there previously only once in four years. In justice to Mrs. Allan, who was a most estimable woman, and who apparently had never seen Poe but once, we print — perhaps indiscreetly — the following letter from her niece as giving her side of the unfortunate occurrence, premising that in certain Virginia circles the view prevails to this day that Poe was utterly bad, that on his return from the University he gambled with Mr. Allan's servants, and that when

he demanded money of one of the Allan ladies, he stoned the house and smashed the windows on being refused; adding, however, that the same accusation of forgery was brought against Poe, later, in Philadelphia, was tried in a court of justice, and triumphantly refuted, heavy damages being awarded the poet:

"I am afraid I can give you very little assistance about Edgar Allan Poe, for he has been so often written up, and there are none of his contemporaries now living that I know of, and all that I could write you would be family tradition, and that, you know, is not always authentic. Mr. John Allan had no children during his first marriage, and after he adopted Poe he became as devoted to him and as proud of his talents as if he were his own son, sparing no expense on his education, dress, and living. Poe, expecting to be his heir, began at the University a wild and reckless career, and was guilty of conduct so unbecoming a gentleman that it offended Mr. Allan seriously. That, however, did not break the ties that had so long existed, and Mr. Allan tried in every way to reform him. Poe, however, continued the same dissolute life, breaking good resolutions and promises often and over, and ended by forging Mr. Allan's name. The money was paid, but then it was that Poe was discarded and forbidden the house of his benefactor, and all intercourse was refused. Mr. Allan married, secondly, my aunt, Miss Patterson of New Jersey, and she told me that Poe had never been to their house but twice, and she only saw him once. It was when her eldest son was three weeks old. He came upstairs to her bedroom, and began in an abusive manner to rail at herself and baby. She asked her nurse to ring the bell. It was answered by the butler, and

she said: 'James, put this drunken man out of the house,' which he did. The next time he visited the house must have been about four years afterwards, for it was during the last illness of Mr. Allan. He was sitting in a large chair trying to read a newspaper when the door opened, and Poe came in. Mr. Allan became very much excited, shook his cane at him, and ordered him out of the house, using very strong language, for he had never forgiven him, and whether he came to plead for forgiveness, or to upbraid, no one knew, for the old gentleman did not give him a chance to say a word. My aunt always felt it bitterly that the public so often blamed her for the estrangement when she had nothing to do with it, and rarely spoke of him. Of course these things happened long before my day."

The palliation for such conduct could only be the unfortunate manner in which the orphan waif had been reared. Bitter indeed must have been the anguish and despair of such a spirit as Poe's on finding himself thus publicly cut off without even a mention in the will, the laughing-stock of the town where he had lived nearly all his life. In a moment of supreme agitation he was doubtless misled to commit acts which in cold blood would have been atrocious, and this must be his excuse.

Thrown upon his own resources, Poe despairingly turned to a Philadelphia publishing house (Carey & Lea), and sent them the "Tales of the Folio Club," following his friend Kennedy's advice; and, consulting with Wilmer, he and the young editor of the "Visiter" determined to issue the prospectus of a first-class literary journal, of the usual "fearless, independent, and sternly just" kind, an ideal about which

Poe at least was really in earnest, and which he cherished up to his dying breath.

Virginia Clemm, meanwhile, — the poet's cousin, — had developed into a beautiful girl of twelve or thirteen, whose charms, intelligence, and refinement had captivated the heart of Edgar, thirteen years older. A proposition of marriage followed, which was strenuously opposed by Neilson Poe, a third cousin, who had married Virginia's step-sister, and who offered to care for Virginia until she was of a suitable age to marry. This Poe vigorously opposed, and, with Mrs. Clemm's consent, they were licensed to marry, according to the Marriage Records of the City of Baltimore, September 22, 1834. The records of St. Paul's Church Parish, Baltimore, show that Virginia Clemm was born August 22, 1822.

Whether the marriage was actually performed by a minister, after the license was obtained, cannot be positively ascertained. An unfounded tradition affirms that Rev. John Johns (afterwards Bishop of Virginia) performed the ceremony; but the writer has taken the trouble to make careful inquiries of the Johns family, as well as of the registrar of St. Paul's Church, with the following result:

Bishop Johns's son writes:

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 2, 1900.

MY DEAR SIR, — Replying to your favor of Nov. 1st, let me say that the records of marriages performed by Rev. Dr. Johns, in Balto., are, I presume, to be found at Christ Church, Balto., Rev. Dr. Niver, rector. . . . We have no traditions or other information.

Very truly,

A. S. JOHNS.

CHRIST CHURCH, Nov. 9th, 1900.

DEAR SIR, — There is no record of Poe's marriage in the books of Christ's Church in the years 1834, 5, or 6.

I would suggest that you write to Dr. Hodges at St. Paul's Church. They may have it recorded there, as Christ's Church is a daughter of St. Paul's Church.

ROBERT B. NELSON, Assistant.

BALTIMORE, Nov. 15, 1900.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your letter of the 12th inst. to Rev. Dr. Hodges, rector of St. Paul's Parish, has been handed to me, as Registrar of the Parish, for reply in reference to the marriage of Edgar Allan Poe and Virginia Clemm.

In reply I would say that as long ago as Sept., 1884, I made a careful examination of the Records of St. Paul's Parish for Mr. Geo. E. Woodberry, who was about to publish a life of E. A. Poe, and then told him that no record of Poe's marriage appeared in our books, though there were several records of the Clemm family. I forget now the year of the marriage, but think it was prior to 1828 [an error: 1834 was the year. — ED.], for in that year Christ Church was set off from St. Paul's Parish, and any marriage after that time should appear in Christ Church Records, and not in ours. . . .

Yours truly,

CHAS. HANDFIELD WYATT.

There is no complete legal proof that the marriage took place, because there is no return of the minister officiating. This is doubtless the reason why, some months later, May 16, 1836, as seen in the marriage bond, a second license was secured, and the ceremony was performed in Richmond, Va., by the Rev. Amasa Converse, a Presbyterian minister who edited "The Southern Religious Telegraph."

The cause of the removal to Richmond at this time was the establishment of the famous "Southern Literary Messenger," and Poe's engagement, first as a casual contributor to the magazine, and then as its literary editor.

This engagement had been brought about by the kind offices of his good friend Kennedy, to whom T. W. White, editor and proprietor of the "Messenger," had written for a contribution, and who recommended Poe as a very remarkable young man.

Poe sent White some of his "Tales of the Folio Club," one of which — "Berenice" (not, however, one of those named below) — appeared in the number for March, 1835, attracting wide attention. The stories known to have been among "The Tales of the Folio Club" were the "MS. Found in a Bottle," "Lionizing," "The Visionary ("Assignation")," "Siope," "Epimanes," and "A Descent into the Maelström" (the latter on the authority of Mr. J. H. B. Latrobe, in Miss Rice's Baltimore Memorial Volume, p. 59). Poe seems to have had ten other "Tales of the Folio Club" ready, which he did not use in the competition: "Berenice" (above mentioned), "Morella," "Hans Phaall" (so spelled in the "Messenger" for June, 1835, though repeatedly, in his correspondence, with one *l* only), "Bon-Bon," "Shadow," "Loss of Breath," "King Pest," "Metzengerstein," "Duc de l'Omelette," and "A Tale of Jerusalem."

These tales must have been those described by Mr. J. P. Kennedy in his note to Poe's letter of November, 1834, as then in the hands of Carey & Lea, of Philadelphia, for consideration: "being two series submitted for the prize, for which one was chosen,

and two others at my suggestion sent to Carey & Lea."

One of these tales was sold to Miss Leslie, for the "Souvenir," at $15. Letters dated December, 1834, and March, May, June, and July, 1835, show the author in lively correspondence with Kennedy and White on matters largely pertaining to his new connection with the "Messenger" as critical reviewer. In one of these letters to White he writes: "I must insist on your not sending me any remuneration for services of this nature [aiding the circulation of the "Messenger" by notices in the Baltimore "Republican," "American," etc.]. They are a pleasure to me, and no trouble whatever."

Occasional sums from White of $5 or $20 reached Poe through the mails, and were welcome additions to his purse. Number 10 of the "Messenger" contained thirty-four columns by the new contributor, including "Hans Pfaall" (which, he asserts, "was written especially for the 'Messenger'").

In September, 1835, his correspondence shows that he was already in Richmond, probably at Mrs. Yarrington's boarding-house, and, a little later, was receiving a salary of $520 a year as editor of the "Messenger," increased to $800 by Mr. White's liberality for extra work. This was to be still further increased to $1,000 the next year. He writes exultantly that "his friends had received him with open arms," asks Kennedy's advice as to his course in the "Messenger," and finds that his reputation is increasing in the South.

Already, however, a note of warning sounds from White in September, 1835. "No man is safe that drinks before breakfast. No man can do so and attend to business properly." Poe was beginning to complain

of "ill-health," and had contracted this unfortunate habit of morning potations, either from the delicacy of his constitution or from the hereditary "blue devils" from which he suffered. Just after his arrival in Richmond, indeed, when everything seemed bright, and he had been employed by White at something more than $40 a month, he fell into low spirits, and wrote Kennedy a despairing letter in which he says: "I am suffering under a depression of spirits, such as I have never felt before. I have struggled in vain against the influence of this melancholy; *you will believe* me, when I say that I am still miserable, in spite of the great improvement in my circumstances. . . . I am wretched, and know not why. Console me, — for you can. But let it be quickly, or it will be too late. . . . Persuade me to do what is right. . . . Urge me to do what is right. . . . Fail not, as you value your peace of mind hereafter."

Kennedy replied in consoling words and lulled the rasped spirit of the poet as well as he could, fearing that the constitutional hypochondria might drive him to desperation. In later life Poe affirmed that to Kennedy he owed life itself, possibly referring to the admirable conduct of the Baltimore novelist in lending him money at critical periods of his existence and giving him the sound advice which he so much needed.

The bibliography of Poe's writings will show the variety and multiplicity of his work during the eighteen months he resided in Richmond, two whole volumes alone of the present edition being devoted to the uncollected reviews and essays in the "Messenger." He showed himself a most industrious and indefatigable editor, author, and critic, pouring forth a tide of reviews, critiques, poems (revised or original), stories,

satires, and romances such as hardly any two men could have been expected to supply. These are treated more fully in the following chapter and show the epoch-making character of Poe's work as an imaginative writer and scientific critic.

In the early stage of the Richmond period, after the marriage, the Poes seem to have kept house and taken boarders, borrowing money from Kennedy and the Poe family to establish themselves. The evil habit of borrowing began to grow on Poe in spite of the abundant support his "Messenger" connection gave him. One is loath, however, to believe that there was any sharp practice connected with it. That Poe abundantly understood the humorous side and the practices of the "dead beat" is plain from his "Diddling Considered as One of the Exact Sciences."

CHAPTER VI.

1837–1840.

ADRIFT: NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA.

THE last leaf of the "Southern Literary Messenger" for January, 1837, contained the following announcement:

To the Patrons of the Southern Literary Messenger:

"In issuing the present number of the 'Messenger' (the first of a new volume) I deem it proper to inform my subscribers, and the public generally, that Mr. Poe, who has filled the editorial department for the last twelve months with so much ability, retired from that station on the 3d inst., and the entire management of the work again devolves on myself alone. Mr. P., however, will continue to furnish its columns, from time to time, with the effusions of his vigorous and popular pen, — and my old contributors, among whom I am proud to number some of the best writers in our state and country, will doubtless continue to favor me with their valuable contributions. . . .

"It is perhaps due to Mr. Poe to state, that he is not responsible for any of the articles which appear in the present number, except the reviews of 'Bryant's Poems,' 'George Balcombe,' 'Irving's Astoria,' 'Reynolds's Address on the South Sea Expedition,' 'Anthon's Cicero,' — the first number of 'Arthur Gordon Pym,' a sea story, and *two poetical effusions* to which

his name is prefixed.' . . . — RICHMOND, January 26, 1837.

In an earlier number, for December, 1835, the publisher had said:

"Among these [contributors], we hope to be pardoned for singling out the name of Mr. EDGAR A. POE; not with design to make any invidious distinction, but because such a mention of him finds numberless precedents in the journals on every side, which have rung the praises of his uniquely original vein of imagination, and of humorous, delicate satire."

Page 72 of the "Southern Literary Messenger" for January, 1837, contained a foot-note printed in small type attached to the review of "Anthon's Cicero," to the following effect:

"Mr. Poe's attention being called in another direction, he will decline, with the present number, the Editorial duties on the 'Messenger.' His Critical Notices for this month end with Professor Anthon's 'Cicero' — what follows is from another hand. With the best wishes to the Magazine, and to its few foes as well as many friends, he is now desirous of bidding all parties a peaceable farewell."

Whatever may have been the cause of the "peaceable farewell," — the rupture between Poe and White, — it is absolutely incredible that it could have been the "idleness" or "irregularity" of the former, for in this final number for January, 1837, fully *one-third* of the ninety-six pages is occupied by the eight contributions of the poet-critic, nor is it correct to say (Woodberry, 103) that "Poe furnished no more installments of his serial narrative, 'Arthur Gordon Pym,' which had just been begun in 'The Messenger.'"

The very next number of the "Messenger," for

February, 1837, contains over fifteen columns more of the serial narrative! *Quis credat?*

The previous two years of the "Messenger" had been crowded — enriched beyond compare — with a prodigious variety of work from Poe's ever-fertile, ever-flying pen. If he ventured to republish occasionally what had appeared in his first three timid, scarce, and unknown volumes of 1827, 1829, and 1831, he seldom reproduced an old poem without embellishing it and reducing it to a shape and form that have remained incomparable. The literary perfection which he demanded from his contemporaries was no less sternly exacted from his own writings: with the result that he has yet to be convicted of a technical error in his finished works. The 1827 volume of Poe was suppressed immediately after its publication by C. F. S. Thomas of Boston, and is now so rare that the McKee copy sold in New York, November, 1900, for $2,050. The 1829 "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems" became almost as great a rarity, and the West Point "Poems" of 1831 — in which the forty pages of 1827 had grown to one hundred and twenty-four — are likewise a bibliographical rarity, doubtless even more so then than now when an occasional copy can be picked up at a fabulous price.

To the "Messenger" for 1834–35 (beginning August, 1834, and extending to September, 1835) Poe contributed nine articles; in the "Messenger" for 1835–36 (from December to the following November) Poe had no less than eighteen contributions; and in the volume for 1837, nine contributions, many of them of great length, appear by him: an almost incredible array of work for a young man of "idle,"

"drunken," and "irregular" habits, encumbered with a delicate wife and mother-in-law!

Of the fourteen long prose pieces contributed during these three years, seven are Poe classics: "A MS. Found in a Bottle"; "Berenice"; "Morella"; "Hans Pfaall"; "The Visionary (Assignation)"; "Shadow"; "Metzengerstein"; seven are the remarkable "A Tale of Jerusalem," "Lionizing," "Bon-Bon," "Loss of Breath," "King Pest," "Duc de l'Omelette," and "Four Beasts in One (Epimanes)".

Besides this striking abundance of prose masterpieces, some of which have placed themselves among the rarest prose-poems in the language, there were numerous metrical poems in their early stages — "The Coliseum," "Irene," "Politian," "Israfel," "Pæan," "To Helen," "To Science," "The Valley of Nis," and others: enough to make in all an average of four each month during the period of Poe's incumbency as editor.

There is no doubt, however, that Poe was addicted to drugs and stimulants at irregular intervals and under strong temptations. That he was either an habitual drunkard or an habitual opium-eater is contradicted both by the unanimous testimony of his intimate friends — those who really *knew* him — and by the piles of exquisitely-written manuscript, manuscript written at all hours of the day and night, under all circumstances of good and bad health, hurriedly or deliberately, that have remained behind to attest a physical condition absolutely the opposite of that of a victim of *delirium tremens*.[1] No opium sot, no

[1] The author (who had formed this view independently) was glad to see it confirmed by Mr. Appleton Morgan, "The Personality of

habitual victim of spirituous liquors, could have written this firm, clear, steady, delightfully legible feminine hand-writing. Poe's case has never been scientifically diagnosed by a competent neurologist who possessed the combined pathological and literary equipment and freedom from prejudice necessary to render his case — more singular than "The Case of M. Valdemar" — intelligible to the reading world. Poe himself comes nearest to it in his ghastly tale of "Hop-Frog," in which he describes — autobiographically, one cannot but think — the frightful effects of a single glass of wine on the deformed cripple. His brain was always at fever-heat, a volcano raging with inward fires and full of the molten lava of nervous irritability: to add a single drop of external stimulant to it was to cause it to overflow, and destroy or ravage everything within reach. There are temperaments that come into the world intoxicated, like the "God-intoxicated Spinoza" — so brimming with spiritual fire that there is no room for anything more. Such temperaments are perilously allied to hysteria and madness, but one needs only to glance over the literary annals of the globe to pick out the Sapphos, the Lucans, the Tassos, the Pascals, the Burnses, the Hölderlins, the Collinses. That Poe maintained his absolute sanity to the last, and increased the lofty reasonableness and perfection of his style up to the very gates of Death, is an historical fact illuminative alike to the literary historian and the pathologist.

Poe's position, first as contributor to the "Messenger," then as its editor, had never been a bed of roses. Almost at the outset a confidential correspondent of

Poe" (*Munsey's Magazine*, July, 1897), and by the experts in handwriting to whom he submitted Poe's MSS.

Mr. T. W. White (its proprietor) wrote to him as follows:

"June 22, 1835. James M. Garnett, Essex, to Mr. Thomas W. White, Editor 'South. Lit. Mess.' With respect to Mr. Poe, if I am to judge by his last communication, I should determine that he will rather injure than benefit your Paper. His sole object in this seems to be, to inform your Readers how many Authors he knows, — at least by name. That he may be 'a scholar of the very highest grade' I will not question; but it is not always the best scholars that write best, or have the best taste and judgment. Read his piece over again, and I think you will agree with me that it has neither wit nor humor; or that if it has any, it lies too deep for common understanding to follow it." (MS. letter in the Virginia Historical Society's Library, Richmond, Va.)

Envy and jealousy followed the gifted and unfortunate man wherever he went, and Richmond was no exception. That he did splendid and epoch-making work for White was shown in the enormous increase (from 700 to 5,000) in circulation of the magazine and the great attention that was paid to its literary and critical judgments all over the North and South.

Mr. White himself was an excellent man and business manager who had the sense to see the value of Poe to his journal and to retain these invaluable services as long as he could.

Of Mr. White himself Dr. B. B. Minor (one of the editors of the "Messenger") writes the author under date of November 16, 1900:

"Mr. Thomas W. White, founder and proprietor of the 'Southern Literary Messenger,' was not a man of education or self-culture; but a practical printer.

He was small and of unprepossessing presence; yet pleasant, kind-hearted, and conciliatory: so that he could enlist others in what he proposed to them. In establishing the 'Messenger,' he probably had an advantage that he would not have had as a literary man. He had a printing office and needed only patronage enough to pay him for a good monthly job. In appealing to the pride and patriotism of our people, which he did sincerely, he could evoke the assistance and cooperation of literary men. Thus he obtained for a whole year, gratuitously, the faithful and efficient editorial services of Mr. James E. Heath, grandfather of Professor Richard Heath Dabney. Mr. Heath had a good salary as 2nd Auditor of the State of Virginia and could and did afford to help Mr. White's approved enterprise.

"Mr. Heath was recognized as a literary man and had published a Virginian novel entitled (I think) 'Edge Hill.' I would like to read it again. Mr. White could write a very good and coaxing letter and drew other influential men to the support of his praiseworthy adventure. At first he announced himself as 'printer and proprietor' of the 'Messenger.'

"In Vol. II. he announced himself 'proprietor,' but said that the 'intellectual department was under the conduct of the proprietor, assisted by a gentleman of distinguished literary talents.' He also said: 'The gentleman referred to in the 9th Number of the 'Messenger' as filling its Editorial chair, retired thence with the 11th Number.'

"In Vol. I., No. 9, p. 481, most cordial thanks are given to the gentleman (Mr. Heath) who had up to that time rendered gratuitously such valuable services to the 'Messenger,' and it was stated that 'an

Editor of acknowledged capacity had been engaged, who would devote his whole attention to the work.' This was the person who so soon retired, — with the 11th Number. I do not *know* who this was. I believe that Lucian Minor was of great assistance to Mr. White, after both Mr. Heath and Mr. Poe. Mr. White thought all the world of Mr. Lucian Minor and the 'Messenger' once gave him the highest sort of notice. I think it was in connection with Mr. Minor's Eulogy on Professor John A. G. Davis and his fine picture of a Model Lawyer.

"As early as Vol. III., Mr. White announced himself as 'Editor and Proprietor,' and continued to do so. He died January 19, 1843, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. He was a native of Virginia, but was engaged for some time as a printer in Boston, which may have been a benefit to him in his subsequent work in Richmond. It was once stated somewhere that he was a Northern man, but he had this corrected in the 'Messenger,' which declared that he was a Tuckahoe.

"Mr. White's Editors were James E. Heath, Lucian Minor, Edgar A. Poe; Judge Henry St. George Tucker, for a short time, upon the testimony of Colonel Thomas H. Ellis; and Lieutenant Mathew F. Maury, U. S. N. I must have become acquainted with him soon after I settled in Richmond, in 1841. Mr. John W. Fergusson has reminded me that he took to my law office proof-sheets which Mr. White sent and asked me to correct for the 'Messenger.' My first contribution was published in January, 1842, and must have been written some time before. It was in behalf of my Alma Mater, the University of Virginia, and was edited by Lieutenant Maury, as his writing on the MS. plainly shows. I still have it."

Mr. White's daughter, Eliza, to whom Poe addressed the stanzas "To Eliza," was said to be a beautiful girl who visited the Clemms and Poes after they removed to Philadelphia, and afterwards became a well-known Shaksperian reader, dying unmarried in 1888, seventy-six years of age.

After the severance of his connection with the "Messenger," in January, 1837, Poe is found some months after in New York, at a Carmine Street house numbered with the unfortunate figure 113½. It will be remembered that he occupied the dormitory No. 13 West Range, while he was at the University, a fact in which the superstitious seers of signs and wonders may revel.

The house was a wretched wooden shanty, abundantly large for the little party of three and a few boarders whom the indefatigable Mrs. Clemm decided to take as a help in the household expenses.

Invaluable testimony as to Poe's sobriety at this time is rendered by one of these boarders, a Mr. William Gowans, "the wealthy and eccentric bibliopolist," who lived eight months with the Poes in the Carmine Street house.[1] Mr. Gowans joins N. P. Willis, Frances Sargent Osgood, George R. Graham, and many others with whom Poe was intimately associated in social life and in literary office work, in the assertion that he was never otherwise seen than as the courteous and perfect gentleman whose manners, to women especially, were almost reverential, and to his employers habitually respectful and considerate.

In his letter Mr. Gowans says:

"For eight months or more 'one house contained us, as one table fed.' During that time I saw much

[1] *New York Evening Mail*, December, 1870; Ingram, I., 143.

of him, and had an opportunity of conversing with him often, and I must say, that I never saw him the least affected with liquor, nor even descend to any known vice, while he was one of the most courteous, gentlemanly, and intelligent companions I have met with during my journeyings and haltings through divers divisions of the globe ; besides, he had an extra inducement to be a good man as well as a good husband, for he had a wife of matchless beauty and loveliness ; her eye could match that of any houri, and her face defy the genius of a Canova to imitate ; a temper and disposition of surpassing sweetness ; besides, she seemed as much devoted to him and his every interest as a young mother is to her first-born. . . . Poe had a remarkably pleasing and prepossessing countenance, what the ladies would call decidedly handsome."

Poe himself had carefully trained the beautiful young Baltimore girl, and under his loving and patient tuition — reversing the position of Morella and Ligeia, whose "profound erudition" instructed their husbands — she became an expert linguist. Her mother speaks of her rare musical powers and beautiful voice:

"Of all the women I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia [that mingled reminiscence of wife and mother] was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passions I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expression of those eyes which at once so delighted and appalled me — by the almost magical melody, modulation, distinctness, and placidity of her very low voice."

"Eddie," declares Mrs. Clemm, "was domestic in all his habits, seldom leaving home for an hour un-

less his darling Virginia, or myself, were with him. He was truly an affectionate, kind husband, and a devoted son to me. He was impulsive, generous, affectionate, and *noble*. His tastes were very simple, and his admiration for all that was good and beautiful very great. . . . We three lived only for each other." [1]

And here again arises the exquisite form of Eleonora — the loveliest of all Poe's fable-autobiographies:

"She whom I loved in youth, and of whom I now pen calmly and distinctly these reminiscences, was the sole daughter of the only sister of my mother long departed. Eleonora was the name of my cousin. We had always dwelled together beneath a tropical sun, in the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass. No unguided footstep ever came upon the vale; for it lay far away up among a range of giant hills that hung beetling around about it, shutting out the sunlight from its sweetest recesses. No path was trodden in its vicinity; and, to reach our happy home, there was need of putting back, with force, the foliage of many thousands of forest trees, and of crushing to death the glories of many millions of fragrant flowers.

"Thus it was that we lived all alone, knowing nothing of the world without the valley,— I, and my cousin, and her mother."

With this we may combine two other autobiographic touches — for Poe may best be interpreted by himself — one from "Berenice," the other, the remarkable opening lines of "Eleonora":

"I am come of a race noted for vigor of fancy and ardor of passion. Men have called me mad; but the question is not yet settled, whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence: whether much that is glorious,

[1] Ingram, I., 146.

whether all that is profound, does not spring from disease of thought, — from *moods* of mind exalted at the expense of the general intellect. They who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night. In their gray visions they obtain glimpses of eternity, and thrill, in awaking, to find that they have been on the verge of the great secret. In snatches, they learn something of the wisdom which is of good, and more of the mere knowledge which is of evil. They penetrate, however rudderless or compassless, into the vast ocean of the 'light ineffable'; and again, like the adventures of the Nubian geographer, '*agressi sunt mare tenebrarum, quid in eo esset exploraturi.*'

"We will say, then, that I am mad." (*Eleonora.*)

"To muse for long unwearied hours, with my attention riveted to some frivolous device on the margin or in the typography of a book; to become absorbed, for the better part of a summer's day, in a quaint shadow falling aslant upon the tapestry or upon the floor; lose myself, for an entire night, in watching the steady flame of a lamp or the embers of a fire; to dream away whole days over the perfume of a flower; to repeat, monotonously, some common word, until the sound, by dint of frequent repetition, ceased to convey any idea whatever to the mind; to lose all sense of motion or physical existence, by means of absolute bodily quiescence long and obstinately persevered in: such were a few of the most common and least pernicious vagaries induced by a condition of the mental faculties, not, indeed, altogether unparalleled, but certainly bidding defiance to anything like analysis or explanation." (*Berenice.*)

Here is Poe drawing his own silhouette out of the cloudland of memory and self-analysis: the dreamer, the poet, the madman, the monomaniac, if you will, passionately addicted to revery, as passionately as the Hindoo who fixes his lifelong glance on the mystic lotus, the ineffable flower, that lifts its chalice above the slime of Life; the ardent lover, the remnant of an ancient race feverishly enamored of the Beautiful, the solitary deluged with poetic visions, whose eye for the Unknown is almost celestially clear, while every step in the Actual is a stumble.

"Berenice and I were cousins, and we grew up together in my paternal halls. Yet differently we grew — I, ill of health, and buried in gloom — she, agile, graceful, and overflowing with energy; hers, the ramble on the hill-side — mine, the studies of the cloister; I, living within my own heart, and addicted, body and soul, to the most intense and painful meditation — she, roaming carelessly through life, with no thought of the shadows in her path, or the silent flight of the raven-winged hours. Berenice! — I call upon her name — Berenice! and from the gray ruins of memory a thousand tumultuous recollections are startled at the sound. Ah, vividly is her image before me now, as in the early days of her light-heartedness and joy! O gorgeous yet fantastic beauty! O sylph amid the shrubberies of Arnheim! O Naiad among its fountains! And then — then all is mystery and terror, and a tale which should not be told. Disease, fatal disease, fell like the simoom upon her frame; and even while I gazed upon her, the spirit of change swept over her, pervading her mind, her habits, her character, and in a manner the most subtle and terrible, disturbing even the identity of her person."

Here is the premonition of the ill husband, solitary, introspective, Hamlet-like in his profuse soliloquizing on Death and the Eternal, — a more than Werther in the fiery intensity of his monologue, — and of the mortally stricken wife ten or twelve years before the dread catastrophe of his illness and her death came to pass, — a prophetic realization, in advance, of what was to happen in 1847.

The early New York period was devoted to the completion of "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," a story of an Antarctic Cruise as far south as the 84th parallel, made up of equal ingredients of Poe, "The Ancient Mariner," and Benjamin Morell's "Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Seas and Pacific" (New York: 1832: pp. 183 *seq.*). To give realism to the adventures, Poe paraphrased Morell largely as to facts, but had only to draw on his own marvellous imagination to explain them or to conceive situations full of graphic horror and exquisite though terrible landscape-painting, alternately Claudelike and Salvatoresque in their poetic or their supernatural beauty. Such was the realism of the narrative that it was taken for genuine and, after its appearance in book form in 1838, it was reprinted by the Putnams in England.

The period from 1838 to 1844 Poe and his little family spent in Philadelphia, then the literary metropolis of the Union. While he was in Richmond he is said to have received an invitation from Dr. F. L. Hawks of North Carolina to come to New York and collaborate with him on the newly projected "New York Review." His one contribution to this theological quarterly — then in the throes of the financial panic of 1837–38 — was a review of Stephens'

"Travels in Arabia Petræa," partly original, partly compiled from the book itself and from Keith's work on Prophecy. Professor Anthon contributed the Hebrew learning of the article.

In a faded and time-stained copy of the "Baltimore Book" for 1839, edited by W. H. Carpenter and T. S. Arthur, now lying before us, we find:

Siope — A Fable.

[In the manner of the Psychological Autobiographists]

By Edgar Poe.

Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
Silence — which is the merest word of all.
(*Al Aaraaf.*)

— the earliest form of an allegory which is perhaps Poe's most majestic piece of prose, worthy of Jean Paul Richter in its music and magnificence. This earliest form of the fable is destitute of the fine lines from the Greek of Alcman and their English interpretation by Poe, found in later editions, and shows that "Arthur Gordon Pym" did not wholly occupy the poet's time at this period.

Philadelphia in the late thirties and forties was an interesting place intellectually. Here the first monthly magazine, the first daily newspaper, the first religious magazine, the first religious weekly, the first penny paper, mathematical journal, juvenile magazine, and illustrated comic paper, ever published in the United States, had started on their career about the middle of the eighteenth century.

We have several pleasant glimpses of the Poes during this period of their sojourn in Philadelphia, even

Griswold paying a tribute to the beauty of their home life:

"It was while he resided in Philadelphia that I became acquainted with him.

"His manner, except during his fits of intoxication, was very quiet and gentlemanly. He was usually dressed with simplicity and elegance, and when once he sent for me to visit him, during a period of illness caused by protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife, I was impressed by the singular neatness and the air of refinement in his home.

"It was in a small house in one of the pleasant and silent neighborhoods far from the centre of the town, and though slightly and cheaply furnished, everything in it was so tasteful and so fitly disposed that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius."

"The residence described," adds Gill,[1] "was a small, brick tenement in North Seventh Street, in that part of the city then known as Spring Garden. The house was on the rear portion of the lot, leaving a large vacant space in front, affording Poe and his gentle invalid wife opportunity for indulging their penchant for plants and flowers."

Mr. C. W. Alexander, publisher of the "Gentleman's Magazine," and a founder of the Philadelphia "Saturday Evening Post," wrote a year after Poe's death of his association with him on the magazine:

"I had long and familiar intercourse with him, and very cheerfully embrace the opportunity which you now offer of bearing testimony to the uniform *gentleness of disposition* [italics Mr. A.'s] and kindness of heart which distinguished Mr. Poe in all my inter-

[1] Life of Edgar A. Poe, p. 100; Chatto and Windus: 1878.

course with him. With all his faults, he was a gentleman; which is more than can be said of some who have undertaken the ungracious task of blacking the reputation which Mr. Poe, of all others, esteemed the 'precious jewel of his soul.'

"That Mr. Poe had faults," he continues, "seriously detrimental to his own interests, none, of course, will deny. They were, unfortunately, too well known in the literary circles of Philadelphia, were there any disposition to conceal them. But he alone was the sufferer, and not those who received the benefit of his pre-eminent talents, however irregular his habits or uncertain his contributions may occasionally have been."

There is a continuous array of testimony of this kind, acknowledging indeed Poe's infirmities — though there is far from unanimity as to these, some absolutely denying them — but almost universally emphasizing his essential goodness of heart. His continual necessities made him an incessant borrower, and his accounts occasionally became entangled; but no one familiar with his published and unpublished correspondence will deny his equally incessant anxiety to pay his whole indebtedness to the very last penny.

Another pleasing glimpse of the domestic life of the Poes at this time is given by one who knew them well:

"Their little garden in summer, and the house in winter, were overflowing with luxuriant grape and other vines, and liberally ornamented with choice flowers of the poet's selection. Poe was a pattern of social and domestic worth. It was our happiness to participate with them in the occasional enjoyment of the beauty of the flowers, and to watch the enthusiasm

with which the fondly attached pair exhibited their floral taste. Here, too, we were wont to participate in the hospitality which always rendered Poe's home the home of his friends. We call to mind some incidents in the pleasantly remembered intercourse that existed between the ladies of our families, especially in the hours of sickness, which rendered so much of Virginia's life a source of painful anxiety to all who had the pleasure of knowing her, and of witnessing the gradual wasting away of her fragile frame.

"But she was an exquisite picture of patient loveliness, always wearing upon her beautiful countenance the smile of resignation, and the warm, ever-cheerful look with which she ever greeted her friends.

"How devotedly her husband loved the gentle being is touchingly illustrated in the Griswold description of his visit [quotation]. . . . This, coming from the malignant Griswold, is an eloquent tribute to the kindly and tender spirit of Poe, whose devotion no adversity, not even the fiend that haunted him in the fatal cup, could warp or lessen, and this attachment, intense as it was, was equally strong and enduring in the soul of his 'Annabel Lee,' his gentle mate, whose affection that poem so touchingly and sadly commemorates:

> "'And this maiden, she lived with no other thought
> Than to love and be loved by me.'

"'She was a child,' sings the poem; and, indeed, Poe himself was little else in the everyday perplexities and responsibilities of life. On leaving Philadelphia for New York, when breaking up their simple, fairy-like home, we were favored with some of their pet flowers, which, preserved and framed, remain in our

household to this day as interesting relics of those happy days with Edgar and Virginia."

The author of this pretty pen-picture of the Poe home life was T. Cottrell Clarke, first editor of the famous Philadelphia "Saturday Evening Post," which had been founded in 1821 by Atkinson & Alexander and was published in the office once occupied by Benjamin Franklin, back of No. 53 Market Street.

In fact, no one ever came *very near* the Poes without being struck by the wholesomeness, sanity, beauty, and brightness of their surroundings. The direst poverty might reign — as it did through life — in their immediate vicinity, yet there is none of the squalor or moral degradation, irresponsibility or seedy neglect which the health of both husband and wife and the frequent extremity of their needs might well have excused. The Imp of the Perverse ruled there rarely, only as the Imp of the Cup — the hereditary fiend which William Poe, his cousin, in a well-known letter to Edgar, declared to be "a great enemy to our family":

"'There is one thing I am anxious to caution you against, and which has been a great enemy to our family, — I hope, however, in your case, it may prove unnecessary, — 'a too free use of the bottle.'"[1]

In Philadelphia it was Poe's singular fortune to fall in with the Good and the Evil Angel of his life — with George R. Graham and Rufus Wilmot Griswold — two persons whose influence on his career during critical periods was profound and far-reaching. The dead French Academician is usually eulogized by his successor; the dead man of letters is sometimes kicked by his expected eulogist.

[1] *Century Magazine*, Sept., 1894, p. 737.

The story of "Graham's Magazine," which exercised an influence on American ante-bellum letters unequalled by any other periodical, not even excepting the younger "Atlantic Monthly," is condensed by Mr. A. H. Smyth from Mr. Graham's own lips, as follows:[1]

"Graham was the owner and editor of 'Atkinson's Casket,' when, in 1841, William E. Burton, the actor, came to him with the request that he should buy 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' of which Burton had been the proprietor for four years. Burton explained that money was needed for his new theatre, that the magazine must be sold, that it numbered 3,500 subscribers, and that it would be sold outright for $3,500. Graham, who at that time had 1,500 subscribers to his own magazine, accepted the offer, and 'The Gentleman's Magazine' was transferred to him. 'There is one thing more,' said Burton, 'I want you to take care of my young editor.' That 'young editor' who, in this manner, entered the employ of George Graham was Edgar Allan Poe."

Mr. Graham bore clear and willing testimony to the efficient service rendered by Poe to the new magazine, which, now combined with the "Casket," took the name of its new owner. From 5,000 subscribers, the number soon increased to over 37,000 (Smyth),—certainly a good sign of a new editor! Graham found little in Poe's conduct to reprove, nor did he remember (continues Mr. Smyth) any cause beyond envy and malice for Griswold's truculent slanders. A quarrel of an hour led to Poe's dismissal, but the friendly relations between the poet and his former em-

[1] A. H. Smyth: Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors: 1892.

ployer remained unsevered. From New York, Poe sent Graham the manuscript of a story for which he asked and received $50. The story remained unpublished for a year, when Poe again appeared in the editorial room and begged for the return of the manuscript, that he might try with it for the prize of $100 offered by the "Dollar Magazine" for the best prose tale. Graham showed his "love and friendship" for the author by surrendering the story, and the judges awarded to Poe the prize for "The Gold-Bug."

The "Dollar Magazine" began its career in January, 1843, and its publishers were the publishers of the "Ledger." When George W. Childs purchased the "Ledger," he bought also the "Dollar Magazine," and changed its name to the "Home Weekly and Household Newspaper." In it Hawthorne published, in 1851, "The Unpardonable Sin."

Meanwhile, after the resignation of Poe, the magazine, still under Graham's management, was edited by Ann S. Stephens and Charles J. Peterson, until Rufus Wilmot Griswold sat in the responsible chair. James Russell Lowell was a subordinate editor of the magazine as early as 1843 and invited Hawthorne, at the instance of Poe, to become a contributor. Graham himself took a large hand in the editorial conduct of his magazine, though after Griswold's dismissal, the well-known critic E. P. Whipple wrote the editorial reviews of more important books.

Beginning with Volume XVIII., being the addition of the ten volumes of Atkinson's "Casket," and the seven volumes of Burton's "Gentleman's Magazine," Graham's first volume, in 1841, was distinguished by the appearance of Poe's "Descent into the Mael-

strōm," and his "Murders in the Rue Morgue." On the cover of Volume XXI., 1842, appears the name of Griswold; and Bayard Taylor and Charles Godfrey Leland were successive editors.

According to Graham's own statement (Smyth, 223), the circulation of the magazine at the height of its popularity never exceeded 35,000, or 37,000. He sold the magazine in 1848, but bought it back in 1849, parting with it definitely only in 1854.

No publication of the day, on this side of the water, had so many and such remarkable contributors, Washington Irving being the only prominent literary American of the day who held aloof. He was the editor of the rival "Knickerbocker," which is said jealously to have guarded the productions of its one great writer. In "Graham's" appeared Longfellow's "Spanish Student," "Belfry of Bruges," "Nuremberg," "Childhood," "The Arsenal at Springfield," and other poems. Hawthorne's "Twice-Told Tales" largely appeared first in "Graham's." George D. Prentice, Fanny Forrester, Alice and Phœbe Cary, Grace Greenwood, William Gilmore Simms, Miss Sedgwick, Frances S. Osgood, N. P. Willis, J. K. Paulding, Park Benjamin, W. W. Story, Charles Fenno Hoffman, and Albert Pike (of "Isadore" fame) were among the writers who aided to surround the new venture with a halo of literary glory.

And this glory came from Graham's honest recognition of the fact that his contributors must be well paid: the first American magazine manager that recognized such business responsibilities. The popularity of the new magazine, under the new management and with such a corps of contributors, was almost instantaneous.

The other — the Evil — angel of Poe's life was Griswold, who succeeded him in the editorial chair of "Graham's."

The Rev. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, D.D., was a Baptist minister who divided his time between literature and religion. Born in Vermont in 1815, he was of excellent Puritan and English lineage, with marked literary tastes and acquirements and so indefatigable as a compiler and editor that though dying at the early age of forty-two, in 1857, he left behind an immense mass of work in history, memoirs, editions, and compilations creditable to his taste and skill. Among the journals he edited were "The New Yorker," "The Brother Jonathan," "The New World," "Graham's Magazine" (1842–1843), and "The International Magazine." His contributions to journalism alone would fill a dozen octavo volumes, while he wrote six or eight independent works on history, biography, philosophy, and theology, with poems, and a novel.

But the work which of all others has endowed Griswold's name with immortality — an "immortality of infamy," as George R. Graham calls it — is "The Works of Edgar A. Poe; Poems, Tales, and Miscellanies; with a Memoir;" two vols., 1849, followed by a third containing the notorious suppressed biography, and a fourth, completing the publication.

All the authorities of the time gave unstinted praise to Griswold as a compiler; the poet Campbell, Whipple, Irving, Poe, Prescott the historian, Bryant, Tuckerman, and other eminent *literati* praised the collections dedicated to the American poets and prose writers of the first jubilee of the century, works which are, indeed, invaluable for the facts they contain and for what they have rescued from oblivion. Griswold

possessed, too, a brilliant and pungent style, which reveals itself often in the Poe Memoir and a critical gift — delicate, incisive, penetrating — of no mean order. With all the masculine strength and untiring industry that he displayed was mingled, however, one soft, one weak spot: he believed himself to be a poet; and on this spot Poe — as might have been expected — infallibly put his finger.

But in contrasting these good and evil demons of Poe's existence so much at length, the conscientious biographer should not overlook the smaller but likewise significant agencies that contributed to mould and round out existence for him at this time.

Among these were Dr. N. C. Brooks of Baltimore and his "American Museum," published in the Monumental City, "The Gift" (Miss Leslie's "Annual"), the Pittsburg "Literary Examiner," and Burton's "Gentleman's Magazine."

Instead of writing a review of Irving, whom he did not like but considered an "overrated writer" of "surreptitious and adventitious reputation," of "tame propriety and faultlessness of style" — as Dr. Brooks had requested him — Poe sent the freshest and most powerful of his tales — the dream-tale "Ligeia," said on the margin of Ingram's copy, in a MS. note, to have been *dreamed*, like Kubla Khan, while he was asleep.

In December, 1838, Poe contributed to "The American Museum," "The Signora Zenobia," and "The Scythe of Time" (rechristened, later, "How to Write a Blackwood Article," and "A Predicament").

"The Gift" for 1839 energized him into writing his story of dualism, the favorite *Doppelgänger* idea

of German literature, "William Wilson," in which he dramatizes Conscience and makes it subordinate to the animal nature. The old balladry of England and Germany is full of the story of the man of two natures so loosely amalgamated that they slip asunder and the evil one goes forth to roam at the midnight hour, or the good one fiercely incarnates itself and confronts the other: ideas as old as the ancient Persian dualism of Light and Darkness, of Ormuzd and Ahriman dallied with by Shelley, and Hawthorne, and Calderon, and Stevenson, and Goethe (whose Faust *and* Mephisto appear simply radiations of the good and the evil in a naturally combined Faust-Mephisto). Poe has artistically slipped the razorlike edge of his analysis in between these twin natures, separated their sutures without the spilling of blood, and set them adrift as marvellous automata, to play over against each other.

"The Museum" for April contained "The Haunted Palace," and the "Gentleman's Magazine" for September "The Fall of the House of Usher," two masterpieces which by a sort of magnetic affinity ultimately ran together and were combined in one story. Of this combined masterpiece Lowell said in "Graham's" for February, 1845:

"As an example of his style we would refer to one of his tales, 'The House of Usher,' in the first volume of his 'Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque.' It has a singular charm for us, and we think that no one could read it without being strongly moved by its serene and sombre beauty. Had its author written nothing else it would alone have been enough to stamp him as a man of genius, and the master of a classic style. In this tale occurs one of the most beautiful of his poems. It loses greatly by being taken out of

its rich and appropriate setting, but we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of copying it here. We know no modern poet who might not have been justly proud of it." [Here he quotes "The Haunted Palace," and adds:]

"Was ever the wreck and desolation of a noble mind so musically sung?"

In a note evidently inspired by Poe himself this number of "Graham's" (p. 52) says:

"Since the publication of the 'Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque,' Mr. P. has written, for this and other journals, the following *tales*, independently of essays, criticisms, etc.: 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt,' 'Never Bet Your Head' [*sic*], 'A Tale of the Ragged Mountains,' 'The Masque of the Red Death,' 'The Colloquy of Monos and Una,' 'The Landscape Garden' [*sic*], 'The Pit and the Pendulum,' 'The Tell-Tale Heart,' 'The Black Cat,' 'The Man of the Crowd,' 'The System of Doctors Tarr and Fether' [*sic*], 'The Spectacles,' 'The Elk,' 'The Business Man,' 'The Premature Burial,' 'The Oblong Box,' 'Thou Art the Man,' 'Eleonora,' 'Three Sundays in a Week,' 'The Island of the Fay,' 'Life in Death,' 'The Angel of the Odd,' 'The Literary Life of Thingum-Bob,' 'The Descent into the Maelström,' 'The 1002-Tale of Scheherazade,' 'Mesmeric Revelation,' 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' 'The Purloined Letter,' and 'The Gold-Bug.' He is also the author of the late Balloon-Hoax. The 'Grotesque and Arabesque' included twenty-five tales."

"The Haunted Palace" appeared in April, and in the following November appeared Longfellow's "Beleaguered City" in the "Southern Literary Mes-

senger." A furious controversy arose in which Poe accused the New England poet of stealing his idea. The reader may judge for himself by comparing the two poems.

There was no reason for Poe's jealousy of Longfellow since the poems are as unlike as charcoal and diamond. Poe never seems to have realized that he *could* not be plagiarized, that he was too unique and original to be copied, that Poe could not under any circumstances be Longfellow. The pretty and picturesque conceit of "The Beleaguered City," is as different from the glory and ghostliness of "The Haunted Palace" as the solemn, almost insane head of Dante is from that of a cherub afloat in one of Correggio's ceilings.

The year 1839 was signalized by two events, — one unimportant, but remarkable as showing the spirit of his enemies, the publication of "The Conchologist's First Book"; the other as witnessing the issue of perhaps the most original volume of short stories ever published — the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque."

As we write, the first and second editions of the manual on conchology (1839, 1840: Philadelphia: Haswell, Barrington, & Haswell) are before us. The facsimile of the title-page of the edition of 1839 reveals all the minutiæ of the descriptive title once in vogue. This is followed by a preface signed E. A. P., explaining the terms Malacology and Conchology, with acknowledgments to Mr. Isaac Lea of Philadelphia and Mr. Thomas Wyatt, "and his late excellent 'Manual of Conchology.'" Three pages of introduction, with quotations from De Blainville, Parkinson, and Bergman — pages very agreeably written — intro-

duce twelve pages of engraved plates of shells, their parts, hinges, etc. Chapters on "Explanation of the Parts of Shells," and on "Classification," then fill up fourteen or fifteen pages more; when at p. 25 the body of the text begins, and extends to p. 146 inclusive. A "Glossary" and "Index" complete the volume, which contains ten pages fewer than the slightly enlarged edition of 1840. The outside cover has a stamped illustration of shells, weeds, and grasses, and the book is bound in paper boards, and copyrighted in Poe's name.

Poe's course in the composition of this work up to page 20 was undoubtedly irregular and reprehensible in not calling attention to the fact that the first twenty pages of the work, including preface, introduction, and explanation of the shells, were a close paraphrase of Captain Thomas Brown's "Conchologist's Text-Book," published in Glasgow in 1837, — whence also Poe's plates are drawn. The remainder of the book is a bit of "job work" arranged between Professor Wyatt, Professor McMurtrie, and Poe, — Poe's "name being put to the work, as best known and most likely to aid its circulation." "I wrote the Preface and Introduction, and translated from Cuvier the accounts of the animals, etc. *All* schoolbooks are necessarily made in a similar way. The very title-page acknowledges that the animals are given 'according to Cuvier.'" (Poe, February, 1847.)

Wyatt, it seems, had published through the Harpers an expensive work that would not sell; hence, turning to Poe as a brilliant and necessitous *littérateur* of the day, willing and anxious for a "pot-boiler," he engaged the poet to popularize the work and issue an edition under his own (Poe's) name. Wyatt sold the

book himself and is, jointly with Poe, responsible for it and its exhibition of moral obliquity.

The translation and digest of Lemmonnier's "Natural History," attributed to Poe, cannot now be traced to him, though he speaks of his intimate knowledge of it in Burton's "Gentleman's Magazine" for July, 1839.

In July, 1839, he became associate-editor with the comedian Burton of "The Gentleman's Magazine and American Monthly Review," the enterprise of a histrionic Englishman who claimed to be a graduate of Cambridge University. Some of his old poems, book-notices, reviews of various kinds, "The Man That Was Used Up," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" (the last three appearing for the first time) summed up his contributions to "Burton's" from July to December, the last two alone being sufficient to make the reputation of an unknown writer.

At this point, in a two-volume publication copyrighted in 1839, published by Lea & Blanchard, of Philadelphia, and dedicated to Colonel William Drayton, the student reaches the first golden milestone in the poet's career. At thirty years of age, before George Eliot or Emerson or, one might say, Walter Scott had begun to write, Poe had produced most of the prose and much of the verse upon which his enduring fame will rest.

All the Poe types reveal themselves in these volumes and stand before us in statuesque perfection: the lonely forlorn woman stricken with early disease and death; the tale of terror and conscience; the old-world romance charged with poetic German mediævalism; the story whose germ is found in an exquisite

poem imbedded in the text, like the Mignon poems of the Wilhelm Meister; the wonderful fictions of pseudo-science in which imagination scarce outdoes reality; the eloquent Platonic dialogue discussing the high themes of immortality, the emotions and sensations of death and the death-chamber, or the destruction of the globe; the humorous grotesque in which whims and vices are scored with a fun and fancy that recall the quaint mythologic life and quainter landscapes on the walls of a Pompeian villa; life-in-death with its dramatic self-realization and infinitely subtle self-analysis; and the wondrous fables of Silence and Shadow that recall the marvellous allegories of Novalis or of Schleiermacher. The ratiocinative tale alone is absent from these 500 pages,— a *genre* soon to develop with swift and magic force in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and "The Gold-Bug." What Poe did in the remaining decade of his life was to refine, polish, amplify this already ample achievement, and to add those inimitable "jingle" poems which Emerson, having no sense of rhythm himself, strove vainly to sneer out of existence with an epithet.

To have accomplished all this in three decades, handicapped as Poe was by disease, illness, poverty, want, and persecution, was to achieve a high and noble distinction that places him even above the young immortals, Keats and André Chénier, who possessed solely the gift of song.

The 1840 edition of the "Tales" was entered in the clerk's office for the eastern district of Pennsylvania in 1839. The following is the title-page copied from the original:

"Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque. | By

Edgar A. Poe. | (Seltsamen tochter Jovis seinem schosskinde Der Phantasie. — GOETHE.) | In two volumes. | Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard. 1840.

"*Dedication.* — These Volumes are Inscribed to Colonel William Drayton, of Philadelphia, with every Sentiment of Respect, Gratitude, and Esteem, By his obliged Friend and Servant, THE AUTHOR.

"*Preface.* — The epithets 'Grotesque' and 'Arabesque' will be found to indicate with sufficient precision the prevalent tenor of the tales here published. But from the fact that, during a period of some two or three years, I have written five-and-twenty short stories whose general character may be so briefly defined, it cannot be fairly inferred — at all events it is not truly inferred — that I have, for this species of writing, any inordinate, or indeed any peculiar taste or prepossession. I may have written with an eye to republication in volume form, and may, therefore, have desired to preserve, as far as a certain point, a certain unity of design. This is, indeed, the fact; and it may even happen that, in this manner, I shall never compose anything again. I speak of these things here, because I am led to think it is this prevalence of the 'Arabesque' in my serious tales, which has induced one or two critics to tax me, in all friendliness, with what they have pleased to term 'Germanism' and gloom. The charge is in bad taste, and the grounds of the accusation have not been sufficiently considered. Let us admit, for the moment, that the 'phantasy-pieces' now given *are* Germanic, or what not. Then Germanism is 'the vein' for the time being. To-morrow I may be anything but German, as yesterday I was everything else. These many pieces are yet one book. My friends would be quite as wise in taxing

an astronomer with too much astronomy, or an ethical author with treating too largely of morals. But the truth is that, with a single exception, there is no one of these stories in which the scholar should recognize the distinctive features of that species of pseudo-horror which we are taught to call Germanic, for no better reason than that some of the secondary names of German literature have become identified with its folly. If in many of my productions terror has been the thesis, I maintain that terror is not of Germany, but of the soul — that I have deduced this terror only from its legitimate sources, and urged it only to its legitimate results.

"There are one or two of the articles here, (conceived and executed in the purest spirit of extravaganza,) to which I expect no serious attention, and of which I shall speak no farther. But for the rest I cannot conscientiously claim indulgence on the score of hasty effort. I think it best becomes me to say, therefore, that if I have sinned, I have deliberately sinned. These brief compositions are, in chief part, the results of matured purpose and very careful elaboration.

"*Contents of Vol. I.* — Morella; Lionizing; WilliamWilson; The Man that was Used Up; The Fall of the House of Usher; The Duc de l'Omelette; MS. Found in a Bottle; Bon-Bon; Shadow; The Devil in the Belfry; Ligeia; King Pest; The Signora Zenobia; The Scythe of Time.

"*Contents of Vol. II.* — Epimanes; Siope; Hans Phaall [*sic*]; A Tale of Jerusalem; Von Jung; Loss of Breath; Metzengerstein; Berenice; Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling; The Visionary; The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion.

"Appendix [containing a criticism of R. A.

Locke's famous 'Moon Hoax,' in addition to Poe's short note to 'Hans Phaall']."

Of these prose romances Mr. Andrew Lang, in his "Letters to Dead Authors," writes:

"An English critic . . . has described them as 'Hawthorne and delirium tremens.' I am not aware that extreme orderliness, masterly elaboration, and unchecked progress towards a predetermined effect are characteristics of the visions of delirium. If they be, then there is a deal of truth in the criticism, and a good deal of delirium tremens in your style. But your ingenuity, your completeness, your occasional luxuriance of fancy and wealth of jewel-like words, are not, perhaps, gifts which Mr. Hawthorne had at his command. He was a great writer — the greatest writer in prose fiction whom America has produced. But you and he have not much in common, except a certain mortuary turn of mind and a taste for gloomy allegories about the workings of conscience.

"For your stories has been reserved a boundless popularity, and that highest success — the success of a perfectly sympathetic translation. By this time of course you have made the acquaintance of your translator, M. Charles Baudelaire."

CHAPTER VII.

1840–1844.

PHILADELPHIA: NEW YORK; BURTON'S "GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE;" "GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE."

In 1840 the great Republic rejoiced in a population of more than 17,000,000, among whom were a vast number of travelled and cultured persons profoundly interested in reading and in things of the spirit. A wave of idealism had passed over New England, woven of the study of German mysticism, the worship of Carlyle and Goethe, and a healthy reaction against the overwhelming materialism of the age.

As far back as 1824, 1825, and 1827, indeed when Carlyle unsealed the deep fountains of German ideology, romance, and poetry with his translations of Wilhelm Meister, his "German Romance," and his biography of Schiller, — fortified by the works of Sir Walter Scott as a translator, and the immense influence of Coleridge,— the subtle spirit of German philosophy, metaphysics, and mediævalism had begun to spread like an invisible oil,— tenuous, expansive, all-pervading, — over the English and American mind, aided by the numerous translations of Tieck, La Motte Fouqué, Chamisso, the Schlegels, Schiller, Schelling, Heine, and Uhland that began to pour

from the press, opening up a wonder-world of picturesque "Germanism" that had before been inaccessible.

Where or how, precisely, Poe became first inoculated with this spirit of occult Germany: whether it was bred in him and born with him, naturally, as part of his constitutional heritage from a mixed and high-strung ancestry; or whether he drank it in with his Morellas and Eleanoras and Ligeias as he read and studied with them in the enchanted castles of his fancy, is not clear: Poe nowhere reduces his beliefs — "Eureka" alone excepted — to a system, and he revels in occultism, in mesmerism, in the miraculous revelations of science merely for the intellectual delight of the moment. That somehow — somewhere — he became saturated with the doctrines of Schelling and founded some of his finest tales and "dialogues of the dead" ("Monos and Una" and "Eiros and Charmion," for example) on their poetic mysticism, there can be no doubt.

Poe indeed was constitutionally disposed to "the flight into the land of the supernatural and the miraculous;" "a wilder'd being from his birth," he never ceased to see visions and dream dreams; along with all the great poets that have ever lived — Homer, Virgil, Dante, Caedmon, Chaucer, Langland, Tennyson — his dreams were his most vivid realities, and he was of the dreaming race — the Germanic — the race of Novalis and Schelling, his masters across the German sea.

With the publication of "The Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" in 1840, Poe found himself in an environment of unexampled richness, not only for what it had already accomplished, but also for

what it promised. Lowell, Hawthorne, Motley, Emerson, Holmes, Whittier, Longfellow, Bryant, Irving, were his immediate contemporaries and brethren in art; all about him the glades — the magazines — were vocal with the male and female songsters to whom he was now to turn a biting or a flattering pen; literary animalcules thirsting for recognition swarmed in every hedge-row and flooded the press with their pipings.

Among these Poe soon towered as a giant; even the lordly Irving, who had so long figured as the supreme pontiff of American letters, acknowledged his genius — Irving, who was to America, in the forties, what Goethe had been to Germany and Voltaire had been to France. Possessed of a fearless and independent mind, of extensive knowledge, and of a definite, individual, and sententious system of criticism, Poe lived in an exceedingly trying age — certainly that part of it which extended from 1840 to 1849 — when circumstances forced him to turn his attention — critically — to his contemporaries. He believed himself to be a great critic; and he spoke from his judicial throne with a "cock-sure" Macaulayan infallibility that was exceedingly irritating to the mob; as surprising, indeed, as his belief in his own infallible powers of solving puzzles and enigmas, of the cryptographic kind which he now began contributing to Alexander's "Weekly Messenger;" asserting that "human ingenuity cannot construct any cryptograph human ingenuity cannot decipher."

Our preceding chapter contained a brief notice of Burton and his "Gentleman's Magazine," with an account of its ultimate purchase by George R. Graham and its absorption, with "The Casket," into "Graham's Magazine."

The partnership of Poe and Burton — never amicable — appears in their joint names in the title-page of the "Gentleman's Magazine,"[1] for 1840. He had been appointed editor of this in July, 1839, and to the September number he contributed one of the most thrilling and artistic of his tales, "The Fall of the House of Usher," incidentally, in the portrait of Roderick Usher, painting the following portrait of himself:

"The character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity: these features, with an inordinate expansion of the temple [see the Cole portrait of Poe] made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten."

The Israfel *motif* appears in the couplet from Béranger, which introduces this spectral sonata in words:

> "Son coeur est un luth suspendu;
> Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne."

During the remainder of 1839 Poe reprinted in the "Gentleman's" "William Wilson" and "Morella," some of his short poems, short reviews of books, and in the December number, an original contribution, "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," a dia-

[1] The author is much indebted to Mr. John Thomson, Librarian of the Free Library, Philadelphia, for the loan of files of this magazine and of Graham's: 1839–1849.

logue intensely dramatic in its word-painting, carrying to a rare point of perfection a literary form in which he indulged but three times, though each time masterfully: "The Colloquy of Monos and Una," "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," and "The Power of Words." In "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" one sees the calm Platonic dialogue, surcharged with a frightful meaning and working up to its acme by means of terrific supernatural machinery undreamt of in the days and in the dreams of Plato: certainly no more plausible theory — *vision* — one may truly call it — of the ultimate destruction of the globe was ever imagined or conjured up in words.

All his life Poe pursued the will o' the wisp idea of establishing a literary journal that should be fearless, independent, critical, and classical in style and spirit; the last journey of his restless and fevered life being undertaken with this object. In Philadelphia the demon pursued him while he was in the employ of Burton and Graham; it pursued him in New York; and his correspondence is full of it. The Philadelphia "Saturday Chronicle" for June 13, 1840, contained the announcement that "The Penn Monthly," edited by Edgar A. Poe, would appear January 1, 1841, and prospectuses were widely distributed. It is supposed that a quarrel arose between Poe and Burton on account of the new magazine; Poe was accused of stealing Burton's subscription list and of neglecting his office duties on "The Gentleman's," and a rupture ensued. That he neglected these duties is emphatically denied by Mr. C. W. Alexander, publisher of the magazine, who in October, 1850 (Gill, p. 97), wrote:

"The absence of the principal editor [Burton] on professional duties left the matters frequently in the

hands of Mr. Poe, whose unfortunate failing may have occasioned some disappointment in the preparation of a particular article expected from him, but never interfering with the regular publication of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' as its monthly issue was never interrupted upon any occasion, either from Mr. Poe's deficiency, or from any other cause, during my publication of it, embracing the whole time of Mr. Poe's connection with it."

This candid and clear statement is ingeniously twisted by one of Poe's biographers into a confirmation of the poet's intemperance and into a refutation of the following admirable letter to his old friend Dr. J. E. Snodgrass, in which he describes his habits at Richmond and Philadelphia:

PHILADELPHIA, April 1, 1841.

MY DEAR SNODGRASS,— I fear you have been thinking it was not my design to answer your kind letter at all. It is now April Fool's Day, and yours is dated March 8th; but believe me, although, for good reason, I may occasionally postpone my reply to your favors, I am never in danger of forgetting them.

. . . . . .

In regard to Burton. I feel indebted to you for the kind interest you express; but scarcely know how to reply. My situation is embarrassing. It is impossible, as you say, to notice a buffoon and a felon, as one gentleman would notice another. The law, then, is my only resource. Now, if the truth of a scandal could be admitted in justification — I mean of what the law terms a *scandal* — I would have matters all my own way. I would institute a suit, forthwith, for his personal defamation of myself. He would be unable to prove the truth of his allegations. I could

prove their falsity and their malicious intent by witnesses who, seeing me at all hours of every day, would have the best right to speak — I mean Burton's own clerk, Morrell, and the compositors of the printing office. In fact, I could prove the scandal almost by acclamation. I should obtain damages. But, on the other hand, I have never been scrupulous in regard to what I have said of him. I have always told *him* to his face, and everybody else, that I looked upon him as a blackguard and a villain. This is notorious. He would meet me with a cross-action. The truth of the allegation — which I could [as] easily prove as he would find it difficult to prove the truth of his own respecting me — would not avail me. The law will not admit, as justification of my calling Billy Burton a scoundrel, that Billy Burton is really such. What then can I do? If I sue, he sues: you see how it is.

At the same time — as I may, after further reflection, be induced to sue, I would take it as an act of kindness — not to *say justice* — on your part, if you would see the gentleman of whom you spoke, and ascertain with accuracy all that may legally avail me; that is to say, what and when were the words used, and whether your friend would be willing for your sake, for my sake, and for the sake of truth, to give evidence if called upon. Will you do this for me?

So far for the matter inasmuch as it concerns Burton. I have now to thank you for your defence of myself, as stated. You are a physician, and I presume no physician can have difficulty in detecting the *drunkard* at a glance. You are, moreover, a literary man, well read in morals.

You will never be brought to believe that I could write what I daily write, *as* I write it, were I as this

villain would induce those who know me not, to believe. In fine, I pledge you, before God, the solemn word of a gentleman, that I am temperate even to rigor. From the hour in which I first saw this basest of calumniators to the hour in which I retired from his office in uncontrollable disgust at his chicanery, arrogance, ignorance and brutality, ***nothing stronger than water ever passed my lips.***

It is, however, due to candor that I inform you upon what foundation he has erected his slanders. At no period of my life was I ever what men call intemperate. I never was in the ***habit*** of intoxication. I never drank drams, &c. But, for a period, while I resided in Richmond, and edited the "Messenger," I certainly did give way, at long intervals, to the temptation held out on all sides by the spirit of Southern conviviality. My sensitive temperament could not stand an excitement which was an every-day matter to my companions. In short, it sometimes happened that I was completely intoxicated. For some days after each excess I was invariably confined to bed. But it is now quite four years since I have abandoned every kind of alcoholic drink — four years, with the exception of a single deviation, which occurred shortly *after* my leaving Burton, and when I was induced to resort to the occasional use *of cider*, with the hope of relieving a nervous attack.

You will thus see, frankly stated, the whole amount of my sin. You will also see the blackness of that heart which could *revive* slander of this nature. Neither can you fail to perceive how desperate the malignity of the slanderer must be — how resolute he must be to slander, and how slight the grounds upon which he would build up a defamation — since he can

find nothing better with which to charge me than an accusation which can be disproved by each and every man with whom I am in the habit of daily intercourse.

I have now only to repeat to you, in general, my solemn assurance that my habits are as far removed from intemperance as the day from the night. My sole drink is water.

Will you do me the kindness to repeat this assurance to such of your own friends as happen to speak of me in your hearing?

I feel that nothing more is requisite, and you will agree with me upon reflection.

Hoping soon to hear from you, I am,

Yours most cordially,

DR. J. E. SNODGRASS. EDGAR A. POE.[1]

It is thus seen that it was the occasional convivial glass, not the habitual slip, that was the bane of the poet's existence — a view confirmed by his friend Tucker's testimony when they were boys at the University of Virginia, and reasserted all through his later life by those nearest to him. Mrs. Clemm asserted positively, "For years I know he did not taste even a glass of wine," the period embraced being that between 1837 and 1841; testimony confirmed by L. A. Wilmer ("Our Press-Gang," p. 284), by William Gowans, "the eccentric book-miser of Nassau Street, who bought so many volumes, and sold so few, that both cellar and attic of his place of business were found, at his death, packed with forgotten purchases;"[2] and by many others.

Mr. Appleton Morgan, president of the New York

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, *Baltimore American*, April, 1881.

[2] Appleton Morgan, *Munsey's Magazine*, July, 1897, p. 529.

Shakspeare Society, which interested itself successfully in getting the New York legislature to pass a bill establishing Poe Park and removing to it the Fordham cottage where Virginia died, writes: [1]

"From those who claim to have been Poe's neighbors at Fordham (1846–49), or who said that their parents had been, there came curiously contradictory statements as to the poet's character and habits. I heard it asserted that he was a shiftless, careless, unhappy man, with a kind word for nobody — a drunkard who was pointed out to strangers as he reeled home at night. On the other hand, people who knew him personally, or whose fathers and mothers have so testified to them, have assured me that Poe never drank liquor simply because his stomach was so delicate that a single glass of wine was poison to him, and that he could not, even by a physical effort, swallow, much less retain, a drop of ardent spirits.

"I have been assured by this latter group of witnesses, that Edgar Poe was a sweet and lovable gentleman, with a smile and a courteous word or gesture for every one who met him; that he dressed with scrupulous care, and that, however threadbare his garments, he was always precise and dainty, even dapper, in his neatness and in his gait; that, far from pointing him out with scorn and reproach, his neighbors loved to see him, spoke highly of him, sympathized with his misfortunes, and, had they dared, would have openly offered him the assistance which they did, as often as possible, clandestinely render him."

Dr. J. J. Moran, who attended him in his dying hours, asserted solemnly that there was no smell of liquor on his breath, and that he recoiled with horror

[1] Appleton Morgan, *Munsey's Magazine*, July, 1897, p. 529.

from the offer to take what the physician thought was a necessary stimulant; and the attention of the reader is called to the statement of the official who administered the oath of temperance to Poe when he joined the society just before his death.

Another most interesting letter from Poe to Burton, dated June 1, reveals clearly Poe's lack of vanity as to his writings, his precision and punctiliousness in money matters, the large amount of work he contributed to the "Gentleman's Magazine" during his twelve months' connection with it, and his exculpation of himself from the charge of underhanded dealing in "The Penn Monthly" affair. Though the total number of pages he contributed is inaccurately added up, the correct number of pages being 123 (not "132") still this leaves Poe an average of ten pages per month, not eleven, as he sums it up, for his usual monthly contribution to the magazine. The letter, whatever be its temper, is an epistolary masterpiece, clear, eloquent, and convincing. That Burton was really a good fellow, — that Poe was not justified in denouncing him to Snodgrass as "a buffoon and a felon" — is plain from what we printed in a previous chapter where, when Graham is about to purchase the "Gentleman's Magazine" and combine it with "The Casket," Burton makes a special condition that his "young editor [Poe] is to be taken care of." Poe wrote to Burton as follows:

Sir, — I find myself at leisure this Monday morning, June 1, to notice your very singular letter of Saturday. . . . I have followed the example of Victorine and slept upon the matter, and you shall now hear what I have to say. In the first place, your attempts to bully me excite in my mind scarcely any

other sentiment than mirth. When you address me again, preserve, if you can, the dignity of a gentleman. . . . I shall feel myself more at liberty to be explicit. As for the rest, you do me gross injustice; and you know it. As usual, you have wrought yourself into a passion with me on account of some imaginary wrong; for no real injury, or attempt at injury, have you ever received at my hands. As I live, I am utterly unable to say why you are angry, or what true grounds of complaint you have against me. You are a man of impulses; have made yourself, in consequence, some enemies; have been in many respects ill-treated by those whom you had looked upon as friends — and these things have rendered you suspicious. You once wrote in your magazine a sharp critique upon a book of mine — a very silly book — Pym. Had I written a similar criticism upon a book of yours, you feel that you would have been my enemy for life, and you therefore imagine in my bosom a latent hostility towards yourself. This has been a mainspring in your whole conduct towards me since our first acquaintance. It has acted to prevent all cordiality. In a general view of human nature your idea is just — but you will find yourself puzzled in judging me by ordinary motives. Your criticism was essentially correct, and therefore, although severe, it did not occasion in me one solitary emotion either of anger or dislike. But even while I write these words, I am sure you will not believe them. Did I not still think you, in spite of the exceeding littleness of some of your hurried actions, a man of many honorable impulses, I would not now take the trouble to send you this letter. I cannot permit myself to suppose that you would say to me in cool blood what you said in your letter of yes-

terday. You are, of course, only mistaken, in asserting that I owe you a hundred dollars, and you will rectify the mistake at once when you come to look at your accounts.

Soon after I joined you, you made me an offer of money, and I accepted $20. Upon another occasion, at my request, you sent me enclosed in a letter $30. Of this $30, I repaid $20 within the next fortnight (drawing no salary for that period). I was thus still in your debt $30, when not long ago I again asked a loan of $30, which you promptly handed to me at your own home. Within the last three weeks, three dollars each week have been retained from my salary, an indignity which I have felt deeply but did not resent. You state the sum retained as $8, but this I believe is through a mistake of Mr. Morrell. My postage bill, at a guess, might be $9 or $10 — and I therefore am indebted to you, upon the whole, in the amount of about $60. More than this sum I shall not pay. You state that you can no longer afford to pay $50 per month for 2 or 3 pages of MS. Your error here can be shown by reference to the magazine. During my year with you I have written — in July, 5 pp.; in August, 9 pp.; in Sept., 16 pp.; in Oct., 4 pp.; in Nov., 5 pp.; in Dec., 12 pp.; in Jan., 9 pp.; in Feb., 12 pp.; in March, 11 pp.; in April, 17 pp.; in May, 14 pp., plus 5 copied — Miss McMichael's MS.; in June, 9 pp., plus 3 copied — Chandler's. Total, 132 pp. [*sic*].

Dividing this sum by 12, we have an average of 11 pp. per month — not 2 or 3. And this estimate leaves out of question everything in the way of extract or compilation. Nothing is counted but *bonâ fide* composition. Eleven pages, at $3 per page, would be

$33, at the usual magazine prices. Deduct this from $50, my monthly salary, and we have left $17 per month, or $4.25 per week, for the services of proof reading; general superintendence at the printing office; reading, alteration and preparation of MSS., with compilation of various articles, such as plate articles, field sports, &c. Neither has anything been said of my name upon your title-page, a small item — you will say — but still something, as you know. Snowden pays his editresses $2 per week each for their names *solely*. Upon the whole, I am not willing to admit that you have greatly overpaid me. That I did not do four times as much as I did for the magazine was your own fault. At first I wrote long articles, which you deemed inadmissible, and never did I suggest any to which you had not some immediate and decided objection. Of course I grew discouraged, and could feel no interest in the journal.

I am at a loss to know why you call me selfish. If you mean that I borrowed money of you — you know that you offered it, and you know that I am poor. In what instance has any one ever found me selfish? Was there selfishness in the affront I offered Benjamin (whom I respect, and who spoke well of me) because I deemed it a duty not to receive from any one commendation at your expense? . . . I have said that I could not tell why you were angry. Place yourself in my situation and see whether you would not have acted as I have done. You first "enforced," as you say, a deduction of salary: giving me to understand thereby that you thought of parting company. You next spoke disrespectfully of me behind my back — this as an habitual thing — to those whom you supposed your friends, and who punctually retailed me,

as a matter of course, every ill-natured word which you uttered. Lastly, you advertised your magazine for sale without saying a word to me about it. I felt no anger at what you did — none in the world.

Had I not firmly believed it your design to give up your journal, with a view of attending to the Theatre, I should never have dreamed of attempting one of my own. The opportunity of doing something for myself seemed a good one — (and I was about to be thrown out of business) — and I embraced it. Now I ask you, as a man of honor and as a man of sense — what is there wrong in all this? What have I done at which you have any right to take offence? I can give you no definitive answer (respecting the continuation of Rodman's Journal) until I hear from you again. The charge of $100 I shall not admit for an instant. If you persist in it our intercourse is at an end, and we can each adopt our own measures.

In the meantime, I am,

Yr. Obt. St.,

WM. E. BURTON, ESQ. EDGAR A. POE.

In a previous chapter we have recounted from Graham's own lips the story of the origination of "Graham's Magazine," which was destined for the next ten years to exercise an almost preponderating influence on American letters. No one can look over the files of the magazine for these years without being struck with the wealth and distinction of remarkable names which embellish its pages and with the immediate success which from February, 1841, began to attend Poe's critical and, finally, editorial responsibility for its contents. In his "Chapter on Autography," Poe expressed himself thus of Mr. Graham:

"Mr. Graham is known to the literary world as the editor and proprietor of 'Graham's Magazine' the most popular periodical in America, and also of the 'Saturday Evening Post' of Philadelphia. For both of these journals he has written much and well. His MS. generally is very bad, or at least very illegible. At times it is sufficiently distinct, and has force and picturesqueness, speaking plainly of the *energy* which particularly distinguishes him as a man."

"Energy" indeed was Graham's characteristic, reinforced by exceptional good nature and a kindliness of feeling for his "young editor" which made him come out after Poe's death in an eloquent defence of him.

Of Burton he goodnaturedly wrote in the same "Autography":

"Mr. Burton is better known as a comedian than as a literary man, but he has written many short prose articles of merit, and his quondam editorship of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' would, at all events, entitle him to a place in this collection. He has, moreover, published one or two books. An annual issued by Carey and Hart in 1840 consisted entirely of prose contributions from himself, with poetical ones from Charles West Thompson, Esq. In this work many of the tales were good."

"The Penn Monthly" scheme went up in the usual smoke to which illness, indigence, and financial panic — chronic in those times — so often reduced the journalistic dreams of the poet. Its ambitious prospectus — Prospectus of "The Penn Magazine," a monthly literary journal, to be edited and published in the city of Philadelphia by Edgar A. Poe — was

all that ever appeared of it. It was a *Poe* journal that Poe craved; a journal that would give free play to his own individuality such as he had not been allowed to show in the "Messenger;" a journal that would deal out critical justice in a calm yet stern and fearless manner, guided by the purest rules of Art, impersonal in its judgments, avoiding the "involute and anonymous cant of the Quarterlies" and the arrogance of the cliques and Mutual Admiration Societies; versatility, originality, pungency would enable it to please; there should be "no tincture of the buffoonery, scurrility, or profanity, which are the blemish of some of the most vigorous of the European prints."

It was, however, perhaps just as well that Poe's time should not have been taken up at this moment with the harassing responsibilities of an independent journal; otherwise he might never have made the striking record or produced the profound impression on contemporary literature which his contributions to "Graham's" up to 1842 began to show. To the last number of the "Gentleman's" before it became "Graham's" he had contributed "The Man of the Crowd," a Hugoësque sketch filled with the power, the terrors, the shadows of unknown and unconjecturable crime; the cipher papers in Alexander's "Weekly Messenger" had at this time created a great sensation, ninety-nine of the cryptographs (he says) sent in by his correspondents being solved by him; and there were contributions (untraced as yet) to the "United States Military Magazine."

In "Graham's Magazine" for July, 1841, he speaks in an entertaining way about his cryptographic studies and challenge:

"In the discussion of an analogous subject, in one

of the weekly papers [Alexander's "Weekly Messenger"] of this city [Philadelphia], about eighteen months ago, the writer of this article had occasion to speak of the application of a vigorous *method* in all forms of thought, of its advantages, of its extension, of its use even to what is considered the operation of pure fancy — and thus, subsequently, of the solution of cipher. He even ventured to assert that no cipher, of the character above specified, could be sent to the address of the paper which he would not be able to resolve. This challenge excited, most unexpectedly, a very lively interest among the numerous readers of the journal. Letters were poured in upon the editor from all parts of the country; and many of the writers of these epistles were so convinced of the impenetrability of their mysteries as to be at great pains to draw him into wagers on the subject. At the same time, they were not always scrupulous about sticking to the point. The cryptographs were, in numerous instances, altogether beyond the limits defined in the beginning. Foreign languages were employed. Words and sentences were run together without interval. Several alphabets were used in the same cipher. One gentleman, but moderately endowed with conscientiousness, inditing us a puzzle composed of pot-hooks and hangers to which the wildest typography of the office could afford nothing similar, went even so far as to jumble together no less than *seven distinct alphabets* without intervals between the letters *or between the lines*. Many of the cryptographs were dated in Philadelphia, and several of those which urged the subject of a bet were written by gentlemen of this city. Out of, perhaps, one thousand ciphers altogether received, there was only one which we did not immediately

succeed in resolving. This was one we *demonstrated* to be an imposition — that is to say, we fully proved it a jargon of random characters, having no meaning whatever. In respect to the epistle of the seven alphabets, we had the pleasure of completely nonplussing its inditer by a prompt and satisfactory translation.

"The weekly paper mentioned was, for a period of some months, greatly occupied with the hieroglyphic and cabalistic-looking solutions of the cryptographs sent us from all quarters. Yet, with the exception of the writers of the ciphers, we do not believe that any individuals could have been found among the readers of the journal who regarded the matter in any other light than in that of a desperate humbug. One party averred that the mysterious figures were only inserted to give a *queer* air to the paper, for the purpose of attracting attention. Another thought it more probable that we not only solved the ciphers, but put them together ourselves for solution. This having been the state of affairs at the period when it was thought expedient to decline further dealings in necromancy, the writer of this article avails himself of the present opportunity to maintain the truth of the journal in question, to repel the charges of rigmarole by which it was assailed, and to declare, in his own name, that the ciphers were all written in good faith, and solved in the same spirit." (Article on "Cryptography," "Graham's," July, 1841.)

But up to his abrupt departure from Philadelphia for New York in the spring of 1844, Poe wrote almost as assiduously for Graham and "Graham's" as he had written in 1834, '35, '36, and '37 for White and the "Messenger." Tales, poems,

critiques flowed from his ever-facile pen, which copied also and reprinted — we can see nothing "flagrant" about the action — some of his already printed poems. Poe rarely printed a poem without improving it; but for this reprinting and embellishing process we should miss the final and exquisite forms of "Lenore," "To Helen," "The Raven" "Israfel," "The Bells," and a number of other beautiful things. What Poe reprinted was not old trumpery: it was the new and dainty coinage of a mind ruminating in its maturity over immature *juvenilia* and retouching them with a magician's wand.

The overflow of Poe's genius, — what did not appear in "Graham's" — appeared in "The Saturday Evening Post" (owned by Graham), Snowden's "Lady's Companion," the "Saturday Museum," Lowell's "Pioneer," Miss Leslie's "Gift," "The Dollar Newspaper," "The United States Saturday Post" (a new form of the old "Saturday Post"), and Willis's "Opal," besides lectures delivered once in Baltimore and once in Philadelphia on "The Poets and Poetry of America."

These fruitful years developed in Poe — probably as a corollary from his cryptographic studies, in which his faculty of concentrated reasoning grew almost visibly — the power of writing the ratiocinative tale, a *genre* in which he has never been excelled. An exhibition of this power startled Charles Dickens when, in the "Saturday Evening Post" for May, 1841, he predicted the plot of "Barnaby Rudge" from data furnished by the book itself. Poe's power, hitherto, had been descriptive, mystic, emotional; he had revelled in the senses and in sense-products — rhythm, landscape, psychologic phenomena of a dim

and terrible yet sensualistic character, borderlands betwixt life and death, flashes of the subliminal consciousness whence well up mysterious telepathic communications between the Seen and the Unseen, fateful and funereal scenes of ruin, desolation, and decay draped in the utmost pomp and magic of style.

Now his mind developed a strange and lucid power of analytical reasoning, like a sixth sense suddenly superadded to a brain already abnormally developed. The absurd statement that the poet left West Point because he could not learn mathematics, or the *technique* of mathematics, would be refuted, if refutation it required, by the mathematically clear reasoning of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," "The Purloined Letter," and "The Gold-Bug," belonging to this period.

During the wonderfully productive period of his stay in Philadelphia, Poe wrote or published the following items:

"Siope — a Fable [Silence]," "Ligeia," "How to Write a Blackwood Article [The Signora Zenobia]," "A Predicament [The Scythe of Time]," "The Devil in the Belfry," "The Man that was Used Up," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "William Wilson," "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," "Mystification [Von Jung]," "Why the Little Frenchman Wears his Hand in a Sling," "The Business Man [Peter Pendulum]," "The Man of the Crowd," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "A Descent into the Maelström," "The Island of the Fay," "The Colloquy of Monos and Una," "Never Bet the Devil your Head," "Three Sundays in a Week [A Succession of Sundays]," "Eleonora," "The Oval Portrait [Life in Death],"

"The Masque of the Red Death," "The Landscape Garden [part of "The Domain of Arnheim"]," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Gold-Bug," "The Black Cat," "The Elk [Morning on the Wissahiccon]."

This long list does not include literary hack-work like "The Conchologist's First Book," or "Arthur Gordon Pym" (in book form), "The Journal of Julius Rodman," (first unearthed by Mr. J. H. Ingram in Burton's) and the very numerous and brilliant critiques and poems in "The Gentleman's," "Graham's," "The Pioneer," and other periodicals; nor "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," "The Spectacles," "Diddling Considered as one of the Exact Sciences," "The Balloon-Hoax," "Mesmeric Revelation," "The Premature Burial," "The Oblong Box," "Thou art the Man," and the "Literary Life of Thingum-Bob": all of which were probably composed in Philadelphia but came out in 1844, after Poe left the town.

There are here enumerated thirty-six pieces, all highly original, six or eight standing among the most celebrated of Poe's masterpieces. Ordinary brains impelled to this extent must needs have felt the "fag" which follows inevitably upon overworked mental processes; "his daring critiques, his analytic essays, and his weird stories, following one another in quick succession, startled the public and compelled it to an acknowledgment of his powers;" but Poe — at least for a time — seemed to possess a mind bathed in perpetual vigor and rejuvenation. With admirable good humor he worked through the quires of puzzles, ciphers, enigmas and cryptographs that poured down upon him

after his famous challenge; for fifteen or eighteen months he reigned as the absolute sovereign of "Graham's," dispensing critical justice to Longfellow, Hawthorne, Dickens, Bulwer, Bolingbroke, "The Quacks of Helicon," "L. E. L.," the Davidson Sisters, Campbell's "Petrarch," "The Vicar of Wakefield," Heber, Walpole, Christopher North, Brainard, Lever, Brougham, Howitt, and others; and his creative powers as a storyteller revelled in the long list of works we have enumerated.

He made three contributions to Lowell's "Pioneer," a Boston monthly, which unsuccessfully aspired to the calm, courageous place dreamed of by Poe. It was unsuccessful in that it lived through only three numbers.

Lowell, like Poe, was thus pursued by the vision of an impossible magazine which should altruistically — at $3 per annum — substitute for the "namby-pamby love-tales and sketches poured forth" on the long-suffering public, a "healthy and manly Periodical Literature," such as it could digest.

But the well-deserving enterprise failed, and Lowell was to reserve his strength for the "Atlantic Monthly," some fourteen years later.

Nothing in Poe's career is more creditable to him than his letters to and his true courtesy toward Lowell on the falling through of the unfortunate undertaking, creditable alike to head and heart and purse, when we know how sorely pressed Poe was at this time — and at all times — for his daily bread. When Lowell, overwhelmed with debt and suffering from ophthalmia, gave up "The Pioneer," Poe wrote, March 27, 1843:

"My Dear Friend, — I have just received yours of the 24th and am deeply grieved that you should have been so unfortunate, and, secondly, that you should have thought it necessary to offer me any apology for your misfortunes. As for the few dollars you owe me [it was $30 or $40] give yourself not one moment's concern about *them*. I am poor, but must be very much poorer, indeed, when I even think of demanding them.

"But I sincerely hope all is not so bad as you suppose it, and that, when you come back to look about you, you will be able to continue 'The Pioneer.' Its decease, just now, would be a most severe blow to the good cause — the cause of Pure Taste. I have looked upon your magazine, from its outset, as the best in America, and have lost no opportunity of expressing the opinion." [1]

In April he ceased to be editor of "Graham's."

Why he resigned is not circumstantially known, but the following quotation from Gill (pp. 109, 110) is suggestive:

"Speaking of the severing of Poe's connection with 'Graham's Magazine,' Dr. Griswold writes, 'The infirmities which induced his separation from Mr. White and Mr. Burton at length compelled Mr. Graham to find another editor;' and also in the same connection, 'It is known that the personal ill-will on both sides was such that for some four or five years *not*

[1] Dr. E. E. Hale's "James Russell Lowell and his Friends," 1898, contains an interesting account of "The Pioneer," as does also Vol. 5 of the "New England Magazine" (new series).

a line by Poe was purchased for 'Graham's Magazine.' The italics are Dr. Griswold's. . . .

"Mr. Graham, from whom the magazine was named, is now [1878] living, and when we last saw him, December, 1873, he was in excellent health. We were then, of course, intent upon securing data in regard to the life of Poe; and in a conversation with Mr. Graham, some peculiarly significant facts touching Griswold's veracity in particular were elicited.

"Mr. Graham states that Poe never quarrelled with him; never was *discharged* from 'Graham's Magazine;' and that during the 'four or five years' italicized by Dr. Griswold as indicating the personal ill-will between Mr. Poe and Mr. Graham, over fifty articles by Poe were accepted by Mr. Graham.

"The facts of Mr. Poe's secession from 'Graham's' were as follows:

"Mr. Poe was, from illness or other causes, absent for a short time from his post on the magazine. Mr. Graham had, meanwhile, made a temporary arrangement with Dr. Griswold to act as Poe's substitute until his return. Poe came back unexpectedly, and, seeing Griswold in his chair, turned on his heel without a word, and left the office, nor could he be persuaded to enter it again, although, as stated, he sent frequent contributions thereafter to the pages of the magazine."

Griswold himself, according to Gill (p. 112), was shortly afterwards dismissed by Mr. Graham from the editorship of the magazine for writing a scurrilous anonymous attack on Mr. Charles J. Peterson, a gentleman prominently connected with many American magazines, who was associated with Griswold in the same office, apparently on the friendliest terms.

Though out of immediate editorial work, Poe continued to write with fiercest energy, and naturally recurred to his hope of establishing an independent "Poe" magazine. The following unpublished letter, kindly copied by Dr. B. W. Green for us from a MS. in the State Library, Richmond, is one of many explaining the projected enterprise:

PHILADELPHIA, March 24, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR, — With this letter I mail to your address a number of the "Philadelphia Saturday Museum," containing a Prospectus of "The Stylus," a Magazine which I design to commence on the first of July next, in connection with Mr. Thomas C. Clarke of this city.

My object in addressing you is to ascertain if the list of "The South : Lit : Messenger" is to be disposed of, and, if so, upon what terms. We are anxious to purchase the list and unite it with that of "The Stylus," provided a suitable arrangement could be made. I should be happy to hear from you on the subject.

I hear *of* you occasionally, and most sincerely hope that you are doing well. Mrs. Clemm & Virginia desire to be remembered to all our old acquaintances. Believe me,

Yours truly,

P. D. BERNARD, ESQRE.[1] EDGAR A. POE.

Poe was never famous for his tact, and it is doubtful whether a review announced with such a battailous flourish of trumpets — so denunciatory in its character, especially of the "dull" and "dishonest" Quarterlies — so fierce, stern, uncompromising, and ideal in its aims as the new-born "Stylus" was to be — could

[1] This Mr. Bernard was the husband of one of Mr. T. W. White's daughters, the brother-in-law of the "Eliza" to whom Poe addressed a poem. He was a prominent printer, publisher, and author connected with "The Messenger."

ever have succeeded — with Poe as manager. It did succeed admirably, afterwards, in the seventies as "The New York Nation," but a wider, wiser, and more enlightened public opinion had taken the place of the acrimonious cliques and silly little "corners in literature" that then disfigured Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Richmond.

At the same time, feeling more or less keenly the desperateness of his situation, he fell into eager correspondence with his friend F. W. Thomas, a Baltimorean of literary proclivities who was an office-holder at Washington under President Tyler, as to the possibility of procuring some small government place as a support for Virginia, Mrs. Clemm, and himself. Thomas was an amiable man, deeply interested in his friend's welfare; but his efforts to secure Poe even the humblest place, though his early friend Kennedy was then a high-placed official in Washington, were unavailing. Burns got into the excise, Lamb into the India House, Hawthorne into a consulship, but official patronage was not for Poe. The unfortunate man journeyed to the capital nevertheless and returned in terrible plight, mentally and physically unbalanced. His "Imp of the Perverse," so graphically pictured in "The Black Cat," had made him present himself in Washington in the most unfavorable light and shatter such opportunities or outlook as there may have been for him by an access of wild conduct.

What was really the matter with Poe during a part of this tragic period may be gathered from a heart-rending letter dated six years after the occurrence.[1]

"In this letter to an old and esteemed correspondent, dated January 4, 1848, Poe thus unbosoms him-

[1] Ingram, I., p. 215.

self of his secret — a secret as gruesome as any told in the most terrible of his tales:

"'You say, Can you *hint* to me what was the "terrible evil" which caused the "irregularities," so profoundly lamented? Yes, I can do more than hint. This "evil" was the greatest that can befall a man. Six years ago, a wife, whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever, and underwent all the agonies of her death. She recovered partially, and I again hoped. At the end of a year, the vessel broke again. I went through precisely the same scene. . . . Then again — again — and even once again, at varying intervals. Each time I felt all the agonies of her death — and at each accession of the disorder I loved her more dearly and clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. But I am constitutionally sensitive — nervous in a very unusual degree. I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness, I drank — God only knows how often or how much. As a matter of course, my enemies referred the insanity to the drink, rather than the drink to the in[illegible] I had, indeed, nearly abandoned all hope [illegible] when I found one in the *death* [illegible] can and do endure [Virginia [illegible]] as becomes a man. It w[illegible]ding oscillation between h[illegible] could *not* longer have en[illegible] of reason. In the death of [illegible], I recei[illegible] new but — [illegible]ancholy [illegible]ce.'"

[illegible] worm [illegible]ved relentlessly [illegible] years, [illegible]ugh drove him

mad — did madden him, if we read between the lines of this letter. As a writer in "Scribner's Monthly," reviewing Gill's "Life of Poe," puts it:

"It is now well ascertained that Poe's intoxication was a thing caused by even the smallest quantity of wine, and took the form of terrible despondency or of strange and highly intellectual but deranged orations on abstruse subjects, and that he was a kind husband, gentle-mannered in his associations with many persons, and exceedingly industrious about his writing. Still, that he was subject to intoxication, and was at times intensely irritable, are facts sufficiently attested. The excessive susceptibility to liquor is to be charged probably to his father, who was a drinker; and Poe's descent from an old line of Italian nobles who went to Normandy and thence to Ireland, mixing their peculiar traits with the ardor, the simplicity, the powerful affections of the Irish character, may account for his keen sensitiveness, as well as for some of his metrical predilections. When we reflect that, in addition, he was bred in our high-tempered South, we have another factor in the difficult problem of his life."

The critic then goes on to show that the other writers of note of the time or a little later had extraneous help in their literary struggles: Longfellow and Lowell became professors; Irving and Prescott, Motley and Bancroft, Bayard Taylor and G. P. Marsh rose to be ministers plenipotentiary; Bryant and Whittier were successful journalists; Hawthorne was snugly ensconced in government positions at Salem and Liverpool; and Holmes practised medicine. But Poe had not the business talents requisite to gain even their transient and harassed ascendency. It is difficult for any one who knows the literary life, to

conceive how great was the strain, therefore, to which Poe was subjected. With his delicate and emotional organization it would hardly have been wonderful had he sunk into the depths where Griswold's unsympathetic report placed him. All things considered, then, it must be admitted that he made a brave fight, but was overborne by a legacy of drink, by an overweight of genius naturally morbid, and by the asperity of circumstances."

Poe himself wrote passionately to Mrs. Whitman: "I have absolutely *no* pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have perilled life and reputation and reason. It has been in the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories."

In "Graham's Magazine" for March, 1850, Mr. Graham himself wrote of him at this period:

"I shall never forget how solicitous of the happiness of his wife and mother-in-law he was, whilst one of the editors of 'Graham's Magazine;' his whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. Except for their happiness, and the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own, I never heard him deplore the want of wealth. The truth is, he cared little for money, and knew less of its value, for he seemed to have no personal expenses. What he received from me in regular monthly instalments went directly into the hands of his mother-in-law for family comforts; and *twice* only I remember his purchasing some rather expensive luxuries for his house, and then he was nervous to the degree of misery until he had, by extra articles, covered what he considered an imprudent indebtedness. His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the

spirit of beauty, which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her when she was ill, with all the fond fear and tender anxiety of a mother for her first-born — her slightest cough causing in him a shudder, a breast chill, that was visible. I rode out one summer evening with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes, eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain. It was this hourly *anticipation* of her loss that made him a sad and thoughtful man, and lent a mournful melody to his undying song."

The worship of Woman indeed — *das ewig Weibliche* — was an absorbing feature of the domestic as well as of the literary life of Edgar Poe. Women are the most eager and impassioned defenders of his bedraggled memory; women were the idols and the guardian angels of his household; women are the themes of his most exquisite poems; women have erected, in Baltimore, the most costly monument to his memory. No writer has described, analyzed, viewed Poe more sympathetically, with deeper insight, than Mrs. Whitman, Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Weiss, "Stella," Mrs. Shelton, or Mrs. Shew, four of them at least women of genius capable of describing and analyzing what they saw.

In the "Poetic Principle," after quoting Byron's

"Though the day of my destiny 's o'er,"

Poe adds: "No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea, that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while, in his adversity, he still retains the unwavering love of woman." And later, in the same lecture, he continues:

"He feels it [true Poetry] in the beauty of woman, in the grace of her step, in the lustre of her eye, in the melody of her voice, in her soft laughter, in her sigh, in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments, in her burning enthusiasms, in her gentle charities, in her meek and devotional endurances; but above all — ah! far above all — he kneels to it, he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty of her *love*."

It is this *love* which Mrs. Frances S. Osgood so beautifully depicts in the following words:[1]

"I believe she [Virginia] was the only woman whom he ever truly loved; and this is evidenced by the exquisite pathos of the little poem, lately written, called 'Annabel Lee,' of which she was the subject, and which is by far the most natural, simple, tender, and touchingly beautiful of all his songs. I have heard it said that it was intended to illustrate a late love affair of the author; but they who believe this have, in their dulness, evidently misunderstood or missed the beautiful meaning latent in the most lovely of all its verses, where he says:

> "'A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
> My beautiful Annabel Lee,
> So that her *highborn kinsmen* came
> And bore her away from me.'

"There seems a strange and almost profane disregard of the sacred purity and spiritual tenderness of this delicious ballad, in thus overlooking the allusion to the *kindred angels* and the heavenly *Father* of the lost and loved and unforgotten wife."

And surely no loveless son-in-law could ever have

[1] See Vol. XVII.

addressed to his mother-in-law such a sonnet as Poe addressed to Mrs. Clemm — his "more than mother" — who was

> "— dearer than the mother I knew
> By that infinity with which my wife
> Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life."

Poets do not usually celebrate their mothers-in-law in strains like these.

"It was during their stay there" [in Spring Garden, Philadelphia], relates Mr. A. B. Harris in "Hearth and Home," 1870, "that Mrs. Poe, while singing one evening, ruptured a blood-vessel, and after that she suffered a hundred deaths. She could not bear the slightest exposure, and needed the utmost care; and all those conveniences as to apartment and surroundings which are so important in the case of an invalid were almost matters of life and death to her. And yet the room where she lay for weeks, hardly able to breathe, except as she was fanned, was a little place with the ceiling so low over the narrow bed that her head almost touched it. But no one dared to speak, Mr. Poe was so sensitive and irritable; 'quick as steel and flint,' said one who knew him in those days. And he would not allow a word about the danger of her dying; the mention of it drove him wild."

And yet, wrung in heart and soul as he was during these melancholy Philadelphia years (1842–44), he continued to pour forth a rich volume of work in "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," "The Purloined Letter," "The Gold-Bug," "The Oblong Box," "The Pit and the Pendulum," and many reviews of Horne, Channing, Halleck, Cooper, Griswold's "Poets," etc., the poem "Dreamland," "The Balloon-Hoax," etc., etc.

In 1843 an attempted edition in parts, of "The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe" fell through, only "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and "The Man that was Used Up," appearing in paper covers.

Poe's Parthian dart — his fatal offence — before leaving Philadelphia, was flung at Griswold in the shape of a lecture on "The Poets and Poetry of America," delivered in November, 1843: a caustic excoriation of the compiler who yet had done much admirable work in his self-imposed function of Old Mortality to the unknown.

In April, 1844, Poe found himself again in New York whither he seemed inevitably to drift. The seven years from 1837, when he gave up the editorship of the "Southern Literary Messenger," to April, 1844, during which he had successfully edited — and abandoned — Burton's "Gentleman's Magazine" and "Graham's," had been the most fruitful of his career. This period was the high-water mark period of the publication of the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," and of the editorship of the chief literary journal of the country: a period of many friendships and many enmities, of constant struggle, of varied and continuous authorship, of rapid and remarkable intellectual advance. The health of the family had suffered terribly in Philadelphia; Virginia had entered on the course of lingering illness which was to terminate fatally in 1847 when she was hardly more than a girl; and Poe, unstrung by her alarming hemorrhages, by over-work, and by semi-starvation, gave up to the fearful temptation which assaulted him at times with irresistible force and made him seek oblivion in drugs and drink. Philadelphia had become a disenchanted place: the family moved to New York.

CHAPTER VIII.

1844–1845.

NEW YORK; "THE BROADWAY JOURNAL."

Conscience is an awkward ingredient to mingle with things. The conscientious man is always a terror to the community. Let it be known that a man has a conscience, that he means to exercise it, that neither fear nor favor will intimidate him from his sense of duty to himself and to that community: and instantly such a man becomes a bugbear, a scarecrow, an offence, and a scourge to the evil-doer and the unconscientious.

When he settled in New York, for the second time, in April, 1844, Poe had become this incarnation of the literary conscience of the time. From the moment he had reviewed "Norman Leslie" in the "Southern Literary Messenger" and pricked the spangled bubbles that then danced before the public eye, down to the date of his departure from Philadelphia, the critical instinct — the literary conscience — had been growing in him with vast strides. "I have sometimes amused myself," he says in "Marginalia," "by endeavoring to fancy what would be the fate of an individual gifted, or rather accursed with an intellect *very* far superior to that of his race. Of course he would be conscious of his own superiority; nor could he (if otherwise constituted as man is) help manifest-

ing his consciousness. Thus he would make himself enemies at all points. And since his opinions and speculations would widely differ from those of *all* mankind — that he would be considered a madman, is evident. How horribly painful such a condition! Hell could invent no greater torture than that of a being charged with abnormal weakness on account of being abnormally strong."

In his many letters and prospectuses touching upon this subject, Poe had continually referred to the need of a free, independent, and fearless school of criticism in this country. What, in his "Marginalia," he describes as the "disgusting spectacle of our subserviency to British criticism," was no less painful to him than the indiscriminate laudation of every American poetaster by the native, one might call it the *domestic*, press of the period.

"We *know* the British to bear us little but ill-will; we know that, in no case, do they utter unbiassed opinions of American books; we know that in the few instances in which our writers have been treated with common decency in England, these writers have either openly paid homage to English institutions, or have had lurking at the bottom of their hearts a secret principle at war with Democracy: — we *know* all this, and yet, day after day, submit our necks to the degrading yoke of the crudest opinion that emanates from the fatherland. Now if we *must* have nationality, let it be a nationality that will throw off this yoke."

Year by year the accumulating wrath of his literary conscience, his sense of self-respect and national independence, had gone on growing until it became a lake of fire, and finally broken forth volcanically in "The Literati" and the group of studies on "The Minor

Contemporaries" extending from 1839, with "George P. Morris," to 1845, with "Elizabeth Oakes Smith."

Not that the "lake of fire" did not illuminate as well as flame, scorch, and burn: much of this criticism is optimistic and sweet-tempered, but into it entered one element of discrimination, of art, of sound literary feeling and sense of proportion that was not to be found in contemporary criticism before. Poe from the start was an analyst of admirable powers: he never wrote from mere "instinct" or intuition, and he was as far from the rhapsodic, ignorant, and egotistical Wilson in temperament as he was distant from him, geographically, in space. If he wrote a fine or a noble poem, he was ready instantly with a "Rationale of Verse" or a "Philosophy of Composition" to explain it; and what one reads, in him, with such exquisite ease, grace and melody, was based upon profound knowledge and subtle analytical reasoning. The "trick" of Poe is easily caught, but it was not easily originated: he was the sovereign of lyrical form in America in his day, and his sovereignty was based upon supreme rhythmical feeling backed by completest poetic knowledge.

Being, like his supposititious critic, "gifted, or rather accursed, with an intellect *very* far superior to that of his race," conscious of this superiority and unable to control the consciousness, with opinions and speculations widely different from those of all mankind, he easily made himself enemies and was hooted at as a madman, as abnormally weak, because he was so abnormally, so unintelligibly, strong. Heine was hooted at in almost the same terms and for almost the same reasons: the man of "accursed conscience" in liter-

ary matters who could not and would not endure the literary sloven.

Apropos of Poe's pungency in criticism, it will be well to quote here a letter from the famous Dr. Thomas Holley Chivers who, on receiving one of Poe's prospectuses, wrote in 1840 as follows:

No. 47, Canal Street, N.Y.,
August 27th, 1840.

Dear Sir, — I received your letter this evening, containing a Prospectus of the "Penn Magazine," which you intend publishing in the City of Philadelphia. My absence from the City, among the emerald highlands of the beautiful Hudson, prevented my answering it sooner than to-day. In answer to your solicitation for my support for the forthcoming Journal, I must say that I am much pleased with your "Prospectus" — the plan which you have in view — and hope sincerely that you may realize all your anticipations. As it regards myself, I will support you as long as you may continue the Editor of the above-named work. In the Paradise of Literature, I do not know one better calculated than yourself to prune the young scions of their exuberant thoughts. In some instances, let me remark, you seemed to me to lay aside the pruning-knife for the tomahawk, and not only to lop off the redundant limbs, but absolutely to eradicate the entire tree. In such cases there is no hope of its afterwards bearing any fruit. In surgical operations we always use a sharp knife, and wish to be as expeditious as possible; but we never go so far as to cut away so much of a part as to endanger the vitality of the whole. If we find, as in cases of gangrene, that the vital part is so affected that an operation would be unsafe, we

then choose to let the patient die a natural death, rather than hasten it by our surgical art. I have seen a little sapling transplanted before now, which had every appearance of dying until it had undergone a gentle pruning and watering, when, to the astonishment of the gardener, it towered above all the rest in the grove, and remained a living monument of his skill and kind attention. The same thing is true in regard to the literary world. Bad treatment to the human economy will make a chronic disease sooner than a functional one, [and] by its own process, will terminate in organic derangement.[1]

Poe's mistake was in using the giant spear and the mighty girdle of Brunhilda in crushing infinitesimal foes: in rushing upon Dawes and Fay and "Flaccus" and Headley, upon Channing, English, and Clark with the fury of a whirlwind when a zephyr would have sufficed. The "Dunciad" and "English Bards" were blown full of futile breath in the same way: flies that would have perished of their own inanity now embalmed in indestructible amber. To use a homely image, it will not do for the barber that shaves us to sever our jugular vein! As a physician, Dr. Chivers understood well the application of his surgical metaphor, and it would have been well for Poe if he had taken the letter to heart.

Up to the present date Poe had been going through the first of the two cycles of psychological preparation which he attributed to the Germany of his day: the "impulsive" and the "critical" stages.

"Germans have not yet passed this first epoch"

[1] Passages from the Correspondence of R. W. Griswold. By W. M. Griswold, Cambridge, 1898.

[" the impulsive epoch of literary civilization "]. "It must be remembered that during the whole of the middle ages they lived in utter ignorance of the art of writing. From so total a darkness, of so late a date, they could not, as a nation, have as yet fully emerged into the second or critical epoch. Individual Germans have been critical in the best sense; but the masses are unleavened. Literary Germany thus presents the singular spectacle of the impulsive spirit surrounded by the critical, and, of course, in some measure influenced thereby. . . . For my own part, I admit the German vigor, the German directness, boldness, imagination, and some other qualities of impulse, just as I am willing to admit and admire these qualities in the first (or impulsive) epochs of British and French letters. At the German criticism, however, I cannot refrain from laughing all the more heartily, all the more seriously I hear it praised. Not that, in detail, it affects me as an absurdity — but in the adaptation of its details. It abounds in brilliant bubbles of *suggestion*, but these rise and sink and jostle each other, until the whole vortex of thought in which they originate is one indistinguishable chaos of froth."

This statement is simply tantamount to saying that Poe had *ripened*, that the richness and luxuriance of his youth had mellowed down into clear vigor and manly strength, that this youth was fading into a mellowed manhood in which the full plenitude of his powers was developing along intellectual lines. Nearly all his early work — up at least to 1839, when he was thirty years old — seems to have come in jets, in instantaneous inspirations, in impulsive spurts, geyser-like in splendor and abundance but bearing all the birthmarks of his theory of the short story, the short

poem — that they must be read at a sitting. When he worked at all he worked with a kind of frenzy, a blind fury, that pursued him day and night until he had rid himself of it by writing it off. In colder moments, he returned to the polishing process, using his delicate emery wheel, his diamond dust, diligently to erase the angles and roughnesses of the earlier sketches or poems; substituting critical for impulsive moods, and turning the cold light of reason upon the imaginative landscapes and emotional tropics which his exuberant youth had evoked.

With the 1840 edition of "The Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque," Poe had virtually crossed the equatorial line of youth and entered the new territory of deductive reasoning and perfection in rhythmical form. Nothing henceforth passed his pen that did not possess perfection of one kind or another: his prose style simplifies and clarifies to complete lucidity; his poems take on changing lights and lustres that they never had before; his critical sense awakens to a keenness and alertness that did not scruple to analyze Tennyson, Dickens, Macaulay, Miss Barrett, Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, and show their defects as well as their excellences: in short, Poe was *ripe;* whatever was to come from him henceforth, in the new cycle of existence on which he had entered, was to show this ripeness.

Poe signalized his arrival in New York in April, 1844, by a characteristic bit of fun: the "Balloon-Hoax," published in the New York "Sun" for April 13.

"About twelve years ago, I think," he remarks in his critique on Richard Adams Locke, "the New

York 'Sun,' a daily paper, price one penny, was established in the city of New York by Mr. Moses Y. Beach, who engaged Mr. Richard Adams Locke as its editor. In a well-written prospectus, the object of the journal professed to be that of 'supplying the public with the news of the day at so cheap a rate as to lie within the means of all.' The consequences of the scheme, in their influence on the whole newspaper business of the country, and through this business on the interests of the country at large, are probably beyond all calculation.

"... The 'Sun' was revolving in a comparatively narrow orbit when one fine day, there appeared in its editorial columns a prefatory article announcing very remarkable astronomical discoveries at the Cape of Good Hope by Sir John Herschel. The information was said to have been received by the 'Sun' from an early copy of the 'Edinburgh Journal of Science,' in which appeared a communication from Sir John himself. This preparatory announcement took very well (there had been no hoaxes in those days), and was followed by full details of the reputed discoveries, which were now found to have been made chiefly in respect to the moon, and by means of a telescope to which the one lately constructed by the Earl of Rosse is a plaything. As these discoveries were gradually spread before the public, the astonishment of that public grew out of all bounds; but those who questioned the veracity of the 'Sun'— the authenticity of the communication to the 'Edinburgh Journal of Science'— were really very few indeed; and this I am forced to look upon as a far more wonderful thing than any 'man-bat' of them all."

This was the celebrated "Moon Hoax" emanating from the pen of Locke about three weeks *after* the publication of Poe's "Hans Pfaall's Journey to the Moon," in the "Southern Literary Messenger" for June, 1835.

"From the epoch of the hoax, the 'Sun,'" continues Poe, "shone with unmitigated splendor. The start thus given the paper insured it a triumph; it has now a daily circulation of not far from 50,000 copies, and is, therefore, probably the most really influential journal of its kind in the world. Its success firmly established the 'penny system' throughout the country, and (through the 'Sun') consequently, we are indebted to the genius of Mr. Locke for one of the most important steps ever yet taken in the pathway of human progress."

It was in this "Sun," already famous for its astronomical hoax, that Poe appeared one morning (fittingly on April 1), in large capitals, bearing —

"Astounding News by Express, *via* Norfolk! The Atlantic crossed in Three Days!! Signal Triumph of Mr. Monck Mason's Flying Machine!!!

"*Arrival at Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, S.C., of Mr. Mason, Mr. Robert Holland, Mr. Henson, Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, and four others, in the Steering Balloon, 'Victoria,' after a passage of seventy-five hours from Land to Land! Full Particulars of the Voyage!*"

"The Balloon-Hoax" produced a prodigious sensation, and once more Poe rode, Triton-like, on the crest of a wave of popularity, blowing his horn and scattering the spray of his laughter in the faces of the

gullible. This lifelong love of hoaxing was, in Poe, curiously intertwined with a continual mystical hankering after the incredible, after the dim borderlands between conscious and subconscious life, after such a literary utilization of science as might half persuade himself and others of things undreamt of in the crude physical philosophies of the day. His tales of pseudo-science were just "pseudo," just false, and just true enough to confuse and becloud the half-educated mob of the "forties," and make them take delight in such transcendental physics and metaphysics as Poe, expressing them in his supremely convincing and strenuous style, could conjure up at will. Poe might talk the most absolute scientific nonsense, as doubtless he often did, but he did it in such forceful and captivating style that none but trained scientists could dissent or protest. How few read "The Power of Words" or "Eiros and Charmion," beautiful and imaginative as these pieces are, with any feeling of the absolute baselessness of the physical theories on which they rest, — lost in admiration of the fantastic energy and pictorial quality of the entirely new language in which all their impossibilities are arrayed.

And this breaks the way into a suggestive line of speculation for us, to wit: in these "Tales of Psuedo-Science," "Hans Pfaall," "MS. Found in a Bottle," "Descent into the Maelström," "The Thousand-and-Second-Tale of Scheherazade," "Some Words with a Mummy," "Mesmeric Revelation," "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," "Power of Words," "Eiros and Charmion" — even in "Eureka" — may not Poe be indulging, as he undoubtedly and confessedly was in "Hans Pfaall" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," in a kind of

subtle, subterranean banter, using his physical and scientific knowledge just plausibly enough to bewilder the psuedo-scientific reader and extort from him cries of delight over what probably Poe himself knew, and the twentieth century physicist adjudges to be, the wildest extravaganza? "The fairy tale of science" in the hands of a great verbal artist like Poe could be made a wonderfully prolific source of pleasure to readers who could simply admire and not follow his semi-mystic excursions into the scientific realm. To them every hour of Hans Pfaall's lunar journey would be a rapturous panorama of unfolding facts, every whirl in the Maelström descent would be a shuddering possibility, every toss of the phantom ship on the ghostly foam of the "MS. Found in a Bottle," hurrying to destruction yet never destroyed, would be realizable in imaginative experience.

And the more one recognizes the fact that Poe was a recondite and most exquisite humorist—that he continually preyed with almost morbid pertinacity upon the gullibility of human nature, "accursed" as he was with "the gift of intellect superior to his race"—the more one is inclined to believe that his use of science was not intentionally ignorant or unconsciously false, but that it was another and subtler method of capturing other and subtler intellects to his spells, as he captured many physicians with his "mesmeric revelations," and found "a grave professor of mathematics in a Virginian college" ready to believe the "Moon Hoax" of Locke. The delicious rigmarole, the refined Münchausenism, of his scientific romances, show an unparalleled fertility of talent in the line of artistic deception, just as "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" was so plausibly written that it deceived

the French critics and was looked upon as a true narrative. "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" was republished in London as an actual voyage of discovery.

Hoaxing is thus seen to be an ingrained element of Poe's intellectual make-up, and he has, in our opinion, carried it to a far greater distance and into far more mysterious realms than his students and biographers have hitherto noticed.

Poe's places of residence in New York prior to his final removal to Fordham cottage (now the property of the New York Shakspere Society), in 1846, were numerous and varied. A writer in "The Ledger Monthly" for December, 1900, speaks of them as follows: —

"Edgar Allan Poe once dwelt with his ailing wife on the upper floor of a small brick house at 195 East Broadway, now replaced by the building of the Educational Alliance, and other neighboring places have piquant associations with this gifted man. Temple Court, in Beekman Street, covers the site of an office of his short-lived 'Broadway Journal'; at the corner of Ann and Nassau streets he was employed by Willis upon the 'Evening Mirror,' and in Greenwich Street, near to Rector, there stands in the shadow of the elevated railway a shabby structure that was his abode when he wrote 'The Balloon-Hoax' and the curious poem of 'Dreamland.'

"Going farther afield one finds on the west side of Carmine Street above Varick the site of the modest frame house in which Poe lived when he gave the finishing touches to the 'Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,' and had Gowans, the bookseller, for a fellow-

lodger; later, with Gowans, he had brief occupancy of one of the floors, now darkened by passing trains, of a building in Sixth Avenue, near Waverley Place, and in this forbidding abode produced 'Ligeia' and 'The Fall of the House of Usher,' while in an old-fashioned dwelling lately gone from West Eighty-fourth Street the poet and his family boarded when he wrote 'The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,' and, if tradition is to be relied upon, his most famous poem, 'The Raven.'"[1]

The remainder of the year 1844 was filled out with the following list of literary work: Review of Horne's "Orion," "Graham's," for March; "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," "Godey's Lady's Book," April; Review in "The Pioneer"; "Dreamland," "Graham's," for June; "Mesmeric Revelation," "Columbian Magazine," August; "The Oblong Box," "Godey's," September; work as sub-editor and paragraphist on "The Evening Mirror"; "Thou Art the Man," "Godey's," November; "The Literary Life of Thingum-Bob, Esq., late editor of the 'Goosetherumfoodle,'" "Southern Literary Messenger," December; "Marginalia," I. and II., "Democratic Review," November and December. "The Premature Burial," "The Purloined Letter," "The System of Doctors Tar and Fether" (as he gives the title in a letter to Lowell, May 28, 1844), were in the hands of different editors, but as yet unpublished.

One of his least amiable biographers, commenting on Poe's industry, writes: —

"The list of the tales still in the hands of editors which this letter gives, brings out strongly one source

[1] From Baltimore *Sun* December 30, 1900.

of the discouragement under which Poe had to bear up. He had been for ten years a writer of untiring industry, and in that time had produced an amount of work large in quantity and excellent in quality, much of it belonging in the very highest rank of imaginative prose; but his books had never sold, and the income from his tales and other papers in the magazines had never sufficed to keep the wolf from the door unless he eked out his resources by editing."

The continual necessity for hackwork of this description injured the poet's spontaneity beyond measure and left him fagged, exhausted, enervated, in the humor to lapse into that fearful addiction to morphine so vividly pictured in "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains." Thinking he had found a congenial spirit in Lowell, he wrote to him at this time: "I have been too deeply conscious of the mutability and evanescence of temporal things to give any continuous effort to anything — to be consistent in anything. My life has been *whim* — impulse — passion — a longing for solitude — a scorn of all things present, in an earnest desire for the future.

"Now profoundly excited by music, and by some poems, — those of Tennyson especially — whom, with Keats, Shelley, Coleridge (occasionally), and a few others of like thought and expression, I regard as the *sole* poets. Music is the perfection of the soul, or idea, of poetry. The *vagueness* of exaltation aroused by a sweet air (which should be strictly indefinite and never too strongly suggestive) is precisely what we should aim at in poetry. Affectation, within bounds, is thus no blemish."

The "whim, — the impulse, — the passion," rode and ruled him to the last and perhaps con-

stituted the temperamental factor that coined itself into his theory that all phases of literary art, to be *effective*, must be brief, intense, concentrated, impressionistic, just as impulse, whim, and passion are shortlived and ephemeral. His best poems, — of the ante-"Raven" period, — he declared to be "hurried and unconsidered" — "The Sleeper," "The Conqueror Worm," "The Haunted Palace," "Lenore," "Dreamland," "The Coliseum," in the order named; and in similar fashion he names to Lowell as his best tales, "Ligeia," "The Gold-Bug," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Black Cat," "William Wilson," and "A Descent into the Maelström," also in the order named, adding that perhaps "The Purloined Letter," forthcoming, was the best of his tales of ratiocination.

Poe's correspondence with Lowell ranged up and down the whole gamut of greeting, from "My Dear Friend," "My Dear Mr. Lowell," to the form which the friendship took — under the cooling influence of Charles F. Briggs's criticisms and insinuations — in Poe's review of Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Later on, in the "Messenger" for February, 1849, there were indications that this promising friendship had frozen to an icicle. "To show the general manner of the Fable," he writes, "we quote a portion of what he says about Mr. Poe: —

> "'There comes Poe with his Raven, like Barnaby Rudge,
> Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge,
> Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,
> In a way to make all men of common sense damn metres;
> Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,
> But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind.'"

In return for this Poe denounced Lowell as "one of the most rabid of the Abolition fanatics; and no Southerner, who does not wish to be insulted, and at the same time revolted by a bigotry the most obstinately blind and deaf, should ever touch a volume by this author. His fanaticism about slavery is a mere local outbreak of the same innate wrong-headedness which, if he owned slaves, would manifest itself in atrocious ill-treatment of them, with murder of any abolitionist who should endeavor to set them free. A fanatic of Mr. Lowell's species is simply a fanatic for the sake of fanaticism, and must be a fanatic in whatever circumstances you place him. . . . All whom he praises are Bostonians. Other writers are barbarians, and satirized accordingly, if mentioned at all."

Just about this time (1844–45) Lowell was engaged on the paper "Our Contributors. — No. XVII: Edgar Allan Poe. With a Portrait. By James Russell Lowell," which appeared in "Graham's" for February, 1845, and which delighted Poe with its laudation. Lowell was ten years younger than Poe, and was at the time a young man who viewed his elder with a reverence and appreciation almost amounting to awe. "Mr. Poe," he remarks, "is at once the most discriminating, philosophical, and fearless critic upon imaginative works who has written in America. It may be that we should qualify our remark a little, and say that he *might be*, rather than that he always *is*, for he seems sometimes to mistake his phial of prussic acid for his inkstand. If we do not always agree with him in his premises, we are, at least, satisfied that his deductions are logical, and

that we are reading the thoughts of a man who thinks for himself, and says what he thinks, and knows well what he is talking about. His analytic power would furnish forth bravely some score of ordinary critics. . . . Had Mr. Poe had the control of a magazine of his own, in which to display his critical abilities, he would have been as autocratic, ere this, in America, as Professor Wilson has been in England; and his criticisms, we are sure, would have been far more profound and philosophical than those of the Scotsman. As it is, he has squared out blocks enough to build an enduring pyramid, but has left them lying carelessly and unclaimed in many different quarries."

Mr. Lowell then continued in a penetrating comparison of Poe's precocity with that of Shakspere, Milton, Pope, Collins, Chatterton, Kirke White, Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Southey, Shelley, and Cowley, ending with, "We call them [the poems] the most remarkable boyish poems that we have ever read. We know of none that can compare with them for maturity of purpose, and a nice understanding of the effects of language and metre. . . . Mr. Poe has that indescribable something which men have agreed to call *genius*."

Alas, that this honey should turn into gall, and that the two quondam friends should live to bespatter each other's reputation!

Professor Woodberry's version of the rupture is as follows: —

"Not long before," June 29, 1845, "being on his way from Philadelphia back to Cambridge, Lowell called on Poe; but as, in Mrs. Clemm's words to the former, 'he was not himself that day,' none of those golden hopes, indulged in by Poe, and at an earlier

day by Briggs also, were realized from this personal meeting. The interview, however, prepared Lowell for the following passage in Briggs's next letter, in explanation of what seemed a sudden demise of the [Broadway] 'Journal.'" Then follows an account of a "drunken spree," in which Poe had indulged:

"'Poe's mother-in-law told me that he was quite tipsy the day that you called upon him, and that he acted very strangely; but I perceived nothing of it when I saw him in the morning. He was to have delivered a poem before the societies of the New York University a few weeks since, but drunkenness prevented him. I believe he had not drank [*sic*] anything for more than eighteen months until within the past three months, but in this time he has been very frequently carried home in a wretched condition.'"

That Mrs. Clemm, Poe's guardian angel, the one woman in all the world most anxious to shield her nephew and son-in-law's reputation from the cruel criticism of strangers, should confess to the stranger Briggs that he was "tipsy" is altogether incredible and rests only on the unauthenticated testimony of a man who was now Poe's professed enemy.

Mrs. Clemm, all her life long, showed herself the truest friend of her daughter's husband; and why Willis's style in his famous characterization of her in the "Home Journal" for October 13, 1849, should be stigmatized — except by a determined enemy — as "falsetto," we are at a loss to conceive. This characterization ran as follows: —

"Our first knowledge of Mr. Poe's removal to this city was by a call which we received from a lady who introduced herself to us as the mother of his wife. She was in search of employment for him, and she excused

her errand by mentioning that he was ill, that her daughter was a confirmed invalid, and that their circumstances were such as compelled her taking it upon herself. The countenance of this lady, made beautiful and saintly with an evidently complete giving up of her life to privation and sorrowful tenderness, her gentle and mournful voice urging its plea, her long-forgotten but habitually and unconsciously refined manners, and her appealing and yet appreciative mention of the claims and abilities of her son, disclosed at once the presence of one of those angels upon earth that women in adversity can be. It was a hard fate that she was watching over. Mr. Poe wrote with fastidious difficulty, and in a style too much above the popular level to be well paid. He was always in pecuniary difficulty, and, with his sick wife, frequently in want of the merest necessaries of life. Winter after winter, for years, the most touching sight to us, in this whole city, has been that tireless minister to genius, thinly and insufficiently clad, going from office to office with a poem, or an article on some literary subject, to sell — sometimes simply pleading in a broken voice that he was ill, and begging for him, — mentioning nothing but that 'he was ill,' whatever might be the reason for his writing nothing — and never, amid all her tears and recitals of distress, *suffering one syllable to escape her lips that could convey a doubt of him, or a complaint, or a lessening of pride in his genius and good intentions* [italics ours]. Her daughter died a year and a half since, but she did not desert him. She continued his ministering angel — living with him — caring for him — guarding him against exposure, and, when he was carried away by temptation, amid grief and the loneliness of feelings unreplied to, and awoke

from his self-abandonment prostrated in destitution and suffering, *begging* for him still. If woman's devotion, born with a first love, and fed with human passion, hallow its object, as it is allowed to do, what does not a devotion like this — pure, disinterested, and holy as the watch of an invisible spirit — say for him who inspired it?"

Of this venerated and excellent woman the following is a little sketch furnished us by her relative Miss Amelia F. Poe, to whom this edition is also indebted for likenesses of Virginia and Edgar.

"Maria Poe was a daughter of Gen. David Poe and Elizabeth Cairnes Poe. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland, March 12th, 1790, and was married at St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, Maryland, July 13, 1817, by the Rev. William Wyatt, to William Clemm, Jr., son of Col. William and Catherine Clemm, of Mount Prospect, now (1901) Walbrook, a suburb of Baltimore. They had children, Henry and Maria, who died young. Virginia, afterwards wife of Edgar Allan Poe, born August 13,[1] 1822, died at Fordham, New York, January 30, 1847. Her father, William Clemm, Jr., died in Baltimore, February 8th, 1826, and was buried in St. Paul's graveyard, Baltimore. His widow, Maria Poe Clemm, died in Baltimore, February 16, 1871. She was first buried in her father's lot, No. 27, Westminster Churchyard, Baltimore, and her remains were transferred at the same time as those of her nephew and son-in-law, Edgar Allan Poe, November 17, 1875, and they both lie now under the Poe Monument."

[1] St. Paul's records say August 22.

MARIA CHEMM

[illegible]

[redacted]

[illegible]LAR ALLAN POE.

[illegible] prostrated in destitution and [illegible] still. If woman's devotion [illegible] fee with human passion, [illegible] what does [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] say for [illegible]

[illegible] and ex[illegible] woman the [illegible] furnished [illegible] by her [illegible] [illegible] edition is also indebt[illegible] [illegible] and Edgar [illegible] of Gen. David Poe [illegible] [illegible] Baltim[illegible] [illegible] and was married [illegible]

Poe's first engagement in New York seems to have been with Willis, as "mechanical paragraphist" and sub-editor of the latter's "Evening Mirror." Of Willis he had a very kindly opinion, evinced in the following extract from "The Literati":

"As a writer of 'sketches,' properly so called, Mr. Willis is unequalled. Sketches, especially of society, are his *forte*, and they are so for no other reason than that they afford him the best opportunity of introducing the personal Willis; or, more distinctly, because this species of composition is most susceptible of impression from his personal character. The *dégagé* tone of this kind of writing, too, best admits and encourages that kind of fancy which Mr. Willis possesses in the most extraordinary degree; it is in fancy that he reigns supreme; this, more than any one other quality, and, indeed, more than all his other literary qualities combined, has made him what he is. It is this which gives him the originality, the freshness, the point, the piquancy, which appear to be the immediate, but which are, in fact, the mediate sources of his popularity. . . . Mr. Willis's career has naturally made him enemies among the envious host of dunces whom he has outstripped in the race for fame; and these his personal manner (a little tinctured with reserve, brusquerie or even haughtiness) is by no means adapted to conciliate. He has innumerable warm friends, however, and is himself a warm friend. He is impulsive, generous, bold, impetuous, vacillating, irregularly energetic — apt to be hurried into error, but incapable of deliberate wrong."

Poe's association with Willis on "The Evening Mirror" left a most agreeable impression on the mind and memory of the latter. In a letter dated Idlewild, October 17, 1859, Willis writes:

"In our harassing and exhausting days of 'daily' editorship, Poe, *for a long time*, was our assistant — the constant and industrious occupant of a desk in our office. . . . Poe came to us quite incidentally, neither of us having been *personally* acquainted with him till that time; and his position towards us, and connection with us, of course unaffected by claims of previous friendship, were a fair average of his general intercourse and impressions. As he was a man who never smiled, and never said a propitiatory or deprecating word, we were not likely to have been seized with any sudden partiality or wayward caprice in his favor. *I should* preface my avowal of an *almost reverence* for the man, as I knew him, by reminding the reader of the strange double, common to the presence and magnetism of a man of genius, the mysterious electricity of mind.

"It was rather a step downward, after being the chief editor of several monthlies, as Poe had been, to come into the office of a daily journal as a mechanical paragraphist. It was his business to sit at a desk, in a corner of the editorial room, ready to be called upon for any of the miscellaneous work of the day; yet you remember how absolutely and how goodhumoredly ready he was for any suggestion; how punctually and industriously reliable in the following out of the wish once expressed; how cheerful and present-minded his work when he might excusably have been so listless and abstracted. *We loved the man* for the entireness of fidelity with which he served us. When he left us, we were very reluctant to part with him."

And he goes on:

"Poe was employed by us, for several months, as critic and sub-editor. This was our first personal

acquaintance with him. . . . With the highest admiration for his genius, and a willingness to let it atone for more than ordinary irregularity, we were led by common report to expect a very capricious attention to his duties, and, occasionally, a scene of violence and difficulty. Time went on, however, and he was invariably punctual and industrious. With his pale, beautiful, and intellectual face, as a reminder of what genius was in him, it was impossible, of course, not to treat him always with deferential courtesy, and, to our occasional request that he would not probe too deep in a criticism, or that he would erase a passage coloured too highly with his resentments against society and mankind, he readily and courteously assented — far more yielding than most men, we thought, on points so excusably sensitive. With a prospect of taking the lead in another periodical, he, at last, voluntarily gave up his employment with us, and, through all this considerable period, we had seen but one presentment of the man — a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability." [1]

The year 1845 was the "banner" year of Poe's literary life: never afterwards — never before — did he attain such maturity, such variety, or such ripeness in his intellectual work. The short-lived "Broadway Journal" enabled him to revise and reprint, generally in more finished form, nearly everything that he had yet produced. He has been bitterly reproached and sneered at for this by persons who ought to know better, whose own search for *im*perfection is directly the reverse of Poe's continual search for perfection. This

[1] Ingram, I., pp. 260–262.

was the only opportunity he ever had — an opportunity for which he perpetually prayed — of running a journal, however shortlived, for himself, *on independent lines*, and, after the paper passed into his hands, he availed himself of it in a way for which posterity can be but grateful, for the "Broadway Journal" form is, first and last, with "The Raven and Other Poems" of 1845, and the "Eureka" of 1848, the final and unchangeable form in which, substantially, the Poe texts have been left to us.

In his sketch of Charles F. Briggs, in "The Literati," Poe writes:

"In connection with Mr. John Bisco, he was the originator of the late 'Broadway Journal' — my editorial connection with that work not having commenced until the sixth or seventh [1] number, although I wrote for it occasionally from the first. . . . Mr. Briggs is better known as 'Harry Franco,' a *nom de plume* assumed since the publication, in the 'Knickerbocker Magazine,' of his series of papers called 'Adventures of Harry Franco.' . . . Mr. Briggs's manner, however, is an obvious imitation of Smollett; and, as usual with all imitations, produces an unfavorable impression upon those conversant with the original. . . . He is from Cape Cod or Nantucket, . . . and is the centre of a little circle of rather intellectual people, of which the Kirklands, Lowell, and some other notabilities are honorary members."

The reference to Lowell is significant, as it is to him that after a *fortissimo* of laudation in which super-

[1] Mr. Ingram, I., 270, writes: "'It was not until Nov. 10 that I had anything to do with this journal as editor,' is Poe's endorsement upon our copy, but from its commencement he wrote for it."

latives seem inadequate, Briggs begins, trickle trickle, drop by drop — *piano*, — *piano*, — *pianissimo* — then with a torrential fury, to swell into a tumult of abuse and denunciation of his editorial assistant.

The laudation began with: "I like Poe exceedingly well; Mr. Griswold has told me shocking bad stories about him, which his whole demeanor contradicts. . . . I have always strangely misunderstood Poe, from thinking him one of the Graham and Godey species, but I find him as different as possible. I think that you [Lowell] will like him well when you come to know him personally." [1]

"The rift within the lute" began with the unsavory "Longfellow War," in which Poe accused the Maine poet of plagiarism: "Poe has left the 'Mirror.' Willis was too Willisy for him. Unfortunately for him (Poe) he has mounted a very ticklish hobby just now, Plagiarism, which he is bent on riding to death, and I think the better way is to let him run down as soon as possible by giving him no check. Wiley and Putnam are going to publish a new edition of his tales and sketches. Everybody has been raven-mad about his last poem, and his lecture, which W. Story went with me to hear, has gained him a dozen or two of waspish foes who will do him more good than harm."

Then, vacillatingly, in a letter a few days later, "Poe has, indeed, a very high admiration for Longfellow, and so he will say before he is done [with the "Outis"-Longfellow controversy]. For my own part I did not use to think well of Poe [compare this with our first extract], but my love for you and implicit confidence in your judgment, led me to abandon

[1] Woodberry, Life, p. 226.

all my prejudices against him when I read your account of him [in "Graham's" for February]. The Rev. Mr. Griswold, of Philadelphia, told me some abominable lies about him, but a personal acquaintance with him has induced me to think highly of him. Perhaps some Philadelphian has been whispering foul things in your ear about him. Doubtless his sharp manner has made him many enemies. But you will think better of him when you meet him."

Later, "I shall haul down Poe's name, he has latterly got into his old habits and I fear will injure himself irretrievably. I was taken at first with a certain appearance of independence and learning in his criticisms, but they are so verbal, and so purely selfish that I can no longer have any sympathy with him."

This is followed by the charges of drunkenness, the temporary suspension of the "Journal," the exclusion of Briggs from its management when it was resumed, and a rigmarole of denunciation of Poe by Briggs as a man utterly destitute of "high motive" — because, apparently, Briggs could not make as much money out of Poe's brains as he had hoped and did not have brains enough himself to make a success.

At all events, Poe succeeded Briggs as editor and Bisco went on with the publishing, allowing Poe until October a one-third interest in the publication. October 24 he became sole proprietor of the "Journal," having bought out Bisco's interest for $50.

CHAPTER IX.

1845.

"THE RAVEN."

MEANWHILE, it is necessary to retrace our steps and recall a date the most memorable in Poe's history, the 29th of January, 1845. Hitherto he had been a local, an American, writer: henceforth whatever he wrote was to be the world's possession. The medium of this marvellous expansion was "The Raven," first published in Willis's "Evening Mirror" from advanced sheets of the "American Whig Review."

It was introduced by Willis in the following note:

"We are permitted to copy (in advance of publication), from the second number of the 'American Review,' the following remarkable poem by Edgar Poe. In our opinion, it is the most effective single example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country; and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift. . . . It is one of those 'dainties bred in a book,' which we feed on. It will stick to the memory of everybody who reads it."

A few days later "The Raven" appeared in the February number of this magazine and gave both it and "The Evening Mirror" a wonderful "send off." The poem floated over the Atlantic — as the three Parisian romances of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and

"The Purloined Letter" had done — and called forth the enthusiastic admiration of Miss Barrett and Robert Browning. One "Quarles" commented pseudonymously on the poem in "The Review," but the mystification was soon apparent, and the authorship attributed to the proper source.

"Quarles" had commented as follows — and Quarles is a thinly-veiled Poe: — "The following lines from a correspondent, besides the deep quaint strain of the sentiment, and the curious introduction of some ludicrous touches amidst the serious and impressive, as was doubtless intended by the author, — appear to us one of the most felicitous specimens of unique rhyming which has for some time met our eye. The resources of English rhythm for varieties of melody, measure, and sound, producing corresponding diversities of effect, have been thoroughly studied, much more perceived, by very few poets in the language. While the classic tongues, especially the Greek, possess, by power of accent, several advantages for versification over our own, chiefly through greater abundance of spondaic feet, we have other and very great advantages of sound by the modern usage of rhyme. Alliteration is nearly the only effect of that kind which the ancients had in common with us. It will be seen that much of the melody of 'The Raven' arises from alliteration, and the studious use of similar sounds in unusual places. In regard to its measure, it may be noted that, if all the verses were like the second, they might properly be placed merely in short lines, producing a not uncommon form; but the presence in all the others of one line — mostly the second in the verse — which flows continuously with *only* an aspirate pause in the middle, — like that before the short line

in the Sapphic Adonic, while the fifth has at the middle pause no similarity of sound with any part beside, gives the versification an entirely different effect. We could wish the capacities of our noble language, in prosody, were better understood."

Technically, Poe afterwards, in the "Outis" controversy, explained the verse of "The Raven" as "trochaic octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic."

In "The Philosophy of Composition" he lifts the lid from the cauldron where glowed the constituent elements of his wonderful poem-philtre and reveals to us its mechanism: the poem was to be about one hundred lines long, made up of equal proportions of Beauty and Quaintness intermingled with Melancholy. A strange and thrilling refrain was to impress this combination on the reader by means of long sonorous *o*'s and *r*'s swelling on the ear and the memory in anthemlike ululations, reverberations of waves on the shore, clothed, the whole, in rhythms whose luxuriance of alliterations, susurrus of honeyed vowels and liquids and rise and fall of Eolian cadences would attune the very soul to melody and make the poem as sweet as the dissolving notes of Apollo's lute. The refrain was to be uttered by a Raven: "I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven — the bird of ill-omen — monotonously repeating the one word, 'Nevermore,' at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness* or perfection, at all points, I asked myself — 'Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?'

Death — was the obvious reply. 'And when,' I said, 'is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?' From what I have already explained at some length, the answer here also is obvious — 'When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty;* the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world — and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such a topic are those of a bereaved lover.'

"I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word 'Nevermore.'"

How masterfully this is done the most cursory reading of the poem will show until, as the poet says, the Raven becomes in the last stanza "emblematical of Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance," embalmed in a stanzaic form "each of whose lines, taken individually, has been employed before," but "what originality 'The Raven' has is in their *combination into stanzas;* nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration."

The lame efforts of "Outis" to trace the quaint repetition, in the last two lines of many of the stanzas, to a palpable imitation of the manner of Coleridge, in several of the stanzas of "The Ancient Mariner," produced by running two lines into one, thus:

"For all averred, I had killed the bird that made the breeze to blow,
'Ah, wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay, that made the breeze to blow!'"

remain lame; and equally futile are the attempts to trace magic rhythms of "The Raven" into the recesses of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." Mrs. Browning herself was familiar with the American poem and never accused Poe of stealing her metres.[1]

Of the genesis and evolution of the poem until it appeared in print little or nothing authentic is known. It was one of Poe's surprises, and we cannot trace its growth as we can that of "The Bells" or "Lenore," from the germ to the perfect flower. In print it went through six stages, all immediately under Poe's eye — "The Evening Mirror," "The American Review," "The Broadway Journal" for February 8, 1845, the poet's edition of 1845; the "Southern Literary Messenger;" and there is a copy of the 1845 edition owned by the Century Association which contains a few of Poe's MS. notes.

The nearest approximation to authenticity in the accounts of an earlier origin for "The Raven" is that given by Mr. Rosenbach, in "The Baltimore American" for February 26, 1887: "I read 'The Raven' long before it was published, and was in George R. Graham's office when the poem was offered to him. Poe said that his wife and Mrs. Clemm were starving, and that he was in very pressing need of the money. I carried him $15 contributed by Mr. Graham, Mr. Godey, Mr. McMichael, and others, who condemned the poem, but gave the money as a charity."[2]

As the poem appeared January 29, 1845, it is evident it must have been composed some weeks before,

[1] See Vol. VII. of this edition for the Poe-Chivers controversy and for a further discussion of "The Raven."

[2] Woodberry, Poems, p. 157.

which would place its composition somewhere within the year 1844.

The following newspaper clipping (newspaper not named) sent the writer by John P. Poe, Esq., of Baltimore, the poet's relative, throws interesting light on this obscure subject and affords a variant reading for one of the lines in the famous "Raven": —

"Judge George Shea, formerly of the Marine Court of New York, has a letter written to his father by Edgar Allan Poe.

"The letter from Poe is written on a glazed paper without lines, the penmanship is clear and legible, the ink is unfaded, and this is the way the letter read, punctuation and capitalization being followed:

DEAR SHEA,— Lest I should have made some mistake in the hurry I transcribe the whole alteration. Instead of the whole stanza commencing "Wondering at the stillness broken" &c substituting this:

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore —
Till the dirges of his Hope the melancholy burden bore,
'Nevermore — oh, Nevermore!'"

At the close of the stanza preceding this, instead of "Quoth the raven Nevermore," substitute "Then the bird said 'Nevermore.'" Truly yours, POE.

"On the back of the letter is the address, 'J. Augustus Shea, Esq.,' and the words, 'To be delivered as soon as he comes in.'

"John Augustus Shea in his time was a literary man of ability and industry. His son, Judge Shea, speaking of the Poe letter, said:

"'While at West Point my father and Edgar Allan Poe, who was then a cadet, were the closest associates, and it is probable that in his company Poe received his first poetic impulses, for it was at that time he first began writing verses. Poe left West Point before the time of graduation, and soon after published a volume of poems, now a very rare book, a copy of which was sold in Boston not long since for several hundred dollars. The friendship between the two men continued until Shea's death. Poe often consulted with Shea about the publication of his poems. It was in this way that he committed to Shea the publication, anonymously, of the "Raven" which made its first appearance in the February number of the "American Review," 1845, under the *nom de plume* of "Quarles."

"'It was at this time that the letter from Poe to Shea, given at the beginning of this article, was written and left at Shea's house during his absence. As you will see it is without date. For a short time among those who knew that Shea caused the poem to be published he was regarded as the author, an inference not at all improbable to those who read his "Address to the Ocean," his lines to "The Mountain Pine of Scotland," or "The O'Kavanaugh."'

"Judge Shea himself knew Poe personally, and in the forties was often in his company. Judge Shea said only the other day: 'Poe was one of the best elocutionists I have ever heard. It was my good fortune to be present when Poe and my father read and recited to each other. I remember distinctly Poe's rendering of "Florence Vane" and "Annabel Lee," and more than once his own "Raven." His reading of the "Raven" left upon the mind a very different impression from that which it inspires in

print. It was a weird, rapturous invocation as to an actual presence.

"'Poe was among the first of the authors that took to reading and lecturing as a professional occupation. I heard him in the society library in New York in March, 1845, on "The Poets and Principles of Poetry." But he was at his best in smaller circles of intimate friends. He told me that he recalled me in my early childhood, but I have no recollection of meeting him at West Point. The autograph letter from him to my father was found among my father's papers after his death. In the summer of 1848 the letter was given to Miss Adelaide Burkle of Oswego, now the wife of Major General John P. Hatch, formerly commandant at West Point and afterward the distinguished military commander at Charleston. Mrs. Hatch retained the letter until 1889, when she gave it to my children as a souvenir properly due to them as showing the relations between Poe and their grandfather. The portraits of Poe represent him with a moustache. I do not recall that he wore one when I saw him. He had a graceful walk, a beautiful olive complexion, was strikingly handsome, but he had a weak chin.'"

Additional light is thrown on this period by the following extract from a private letter to the author:

"I wrote you that I did not have any personal acquaintance with Mr. Poe. I employed him to write for the 'Messenger' at his own price, $3 a printed page. He sent me two or three articles entirely unworthy of him, and the magazine. Still, they were published and paid for.

"I have, however, one pleasant thing of him to tell you. When he had published his 'Raven' in the

'American Whig Review,' he was dissatisfied and wrote me a very kind and diplomatic letter, requesting me to suspend the well-known rule of the 'Messenger' against republications, to take out the middle dividing line of its pages and let the poem appear in full, in the beautiful typography of the 'Messenger.' I complied with his request. One of his biographers, speaking of his writings, says he never altered his final compositions; that he neither dotted an i nor crossed a t. If this were true, it would only show with what care Mr. Poe prepared his revised versions for the press. But my recollection was that one of the reasons he assigned for wishing me to republish 'The Raven' was, that he desired to make some alterations. Therefore I collated the versions of the 'Whig Review' and the 'Messenger,' and there were alterations — not many; but in my judgment every one was an improvement.

"Yours very truly,

"B. B. MINOR."

Dr. B. B. Minor is the venerable, still living editor of "The Southern Literary Messenger," who purchased that magazine and edited it from 1843 to 1847. His testimony gives witness to a sixth "state" of "The Raven" hitherto overlooked by commentators, and confirms the statement that Poe never revised without improving: *non tetigit quod non ornavit*, an aphorism which he himself iterates to satiety.

Poe's theory of the death of a beautiful woman being the most poetical of all themes was repeatedly exemplified by him not only in "The Raven," but in "Annabel Lee," "Lenore," "The Sleeper," "Ulalume," and "To One in Paradise"; a theme which haunted him as did the themes of Death, De-

cay, "the worm that dieth not," and the dethroned reason. The "bleak December" of "The Raven" seems a subtle allusion to the death-month of his mother, who died in that month at Richmond, while "Ulalume," with its "sere October," prophetically names his own death-month.

Poe's manner of reciting "The Raven" soon attracted attention and he was frequently called upon to repeat it.

"The other afternoon," writes a correspondent of the Louisville "Courier-Journal" (March 8, 1885), "I asked a lady who knew him to tell me all about Poe; to recall for my benefit the memories of hours passed in his society, and to allow me a sight of her souvenirs. The favor denied others was granted me, and in a few moments we were sitting where the wintry sunlight filtered through the curtains, talking of him; while close at hand was a parcel containing his letters, a portrait, and some 'Marginalia,' all tied together with a faded blue ribbon. There was something inexpressibly touching in her veneration for his memory; friendship for him was too sacred a thing to parade before a curious public. Before opening the parcel she spoke of 'The Raven' and described Poe's manner of rendering that poem; he would turn down the lamps till the room was almost dark, then standing in the centre of the apartment he would recite those wonderful lines in the most melodious of voices; gradually becoming more and more enthused with his new creation, he forgot time, spectators, his personal identity, as the wild hopes and repressed longings of his heart found vent in the impassioned words of the poem. To the listeners came the sounds of falling rain and waving branches; the Raven flapped his

dusky wings above the bust of Pallas, and the lovely face of Lenore appeared to rise before them. So marvellous was his power as a reader that the auditors would be afraid to draw breath lest the enchanted spell be broken.

"He was a distinguished-looking man; his complexion was very odd, at times overcast with an 'intellectual pallor,' and again his cheeks were rosier than a child's; the eyes were marvellous: such orbs, perhaps, as shone in the head of the Lady Ligeia, whilst his mouth wore the sneering expression visible in all portraits of him.

"He was noted for his perfect taste, and was the only person who could render his own poems effectively. He gave lectures and public and private readings; the public readings were given in the ball-room of the Exchange Hotel [Richmond]. He would allow this lady to put some favorite pieces on the programme, and before beginning any of these he would turn towards her seat in the room and preface the reading with a profound bow. One of these favorite pieces was Shelley's 'A Name is too often Profaned.' He would render it exquisitely, blending language with expression, as the music with the words of song."

Poe himself preferred "The Sleeper," one of his boyish poems, to "The Raven."

The following interesting account of the environment within which "The Raven" was written appeared in a recent New York "Mail and Express":

"In spite of the oft-repeated story that Edgar Allan Poe composed his masterpiece 'The Raven,' in the Poe cottage, at Fordham, the most indisputable

tradition proves that the poem was written while Poe was spending the summer at the homestead of Patrick Brennan, father of Deputy-Commissioner Thos. S. Brennan, of the Department of Charities and Correction," said General James R. O'Beirne, a brother-in-law of the Commissioner, to a party of friends a few nights ago.

"Edgar Allan Poe," continued General O'Beirne, "spent the summers of 1843 and 1844 at the homestead of my father-in-law. I have frequently heard the story from my wife's lips, who was about ten years old when she became acquainted with the great poet. In those days, more than half a century ago, Patrick Brennan owned a farm of 216 acres, extending from a point about 200 feet west of Central Park to the Hudson River. It was a picturesque spot, and the neighboring territory was considered a sort of summer-resort whither a number of persons migrated in the hot weather." [Near where the homestead stood, on Eighty-fourth Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway, there is at present building a factory which will bear a tablet commemorative of Poe's composition of "The Raven" near that spot.]

"In the summer of 1843, Poe went to the home of Mr. Brennan, taking with him his invalid wife, Virginia, and her mother, Mrs. Clemm. If Poe's biographies, which paint him as a dissipated man, are true, then they must refer to his younger days, for Mrs. Brennan invariably denied these charges when they were made in her presence.

"During two years she knew him intimately and never saw him affected by liquor or do ought that evinced the wild impetuous nature with which he has

been accredited. He was the gentlest of husbands and devoted to his invalid wife. Frequently when she was weaker than usual, he carried her tenderly from her room to the dinner-table and satisfied every whim.

"Mrs. Brennan was noted for her kindheartedness and sympathetic nature, and once I heard her say that Poe read 'The Raven' to her one evening before he sent it to the 'Mirror.'

"It was Poe's custom to wander away from the house in pleasant weather to 'Mount Tom,' an immense rock, which may still be seen in Riverside Park, where he would sit alone for hours, gazing out upon the Hudson.

"Other days he would roam through the surrounding woods, and, returning in the afternoon, sit in the big room, as it used to be called, by a window and work unceasingly with pen and paper, until the evening shadows.

"No doubt it was upon such an evening, when sitting later than usual by the window, 'dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before,' until every one else had retired, and the moon hidden her light behind a cloud, that he 'heard the tapping, as of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.' He starts and listens for a moment and then forces open the door, anticipating some midnight visitor — 'but darkness there and nothing more.' For awhile he peers out into the darkness, but he can see no one and returns to his chair.

"Then again he hears 'the rapping somewhat louder than before.' This time the sound apparently comes from the window and he flings open the shutter, 'when with many a flirt and flutter, in there steps a stately raven of the saintly days of yore.'

"Above the door opening into the hallway, there stood the 'pallid bust of Pallas.' It was a little plaster cast and occupied a shelf nailed to the door casing, immediately behind the bust, and occupying the space between the top casing and the ceiling; a number of little panes of smoky glass took the place of the partition.

"This bust of Minerva was either removed or broken by one of the Brennan tenants after the family had moved to the city, and no trace of it can be found at the present time.

"Poe was extremely fond of children, and Mrs. O'Beirne used to tell of lying on the floor at his feet and arranging his manuscript. She did n't understand why he turned the written side toward the floor, and she would reverse it and arrange the pages according to the number upon them.

"Mrs. Brennan was never vexed with Poe except on one occasion, when he scratched his name on the mantelpiece in his room. It was a very quaint and old-fashioned affair, with carved fruit and vines and leaves, and Mrs. Brennan always kept it carefully painted. On the day in question Poe was leaning against the mantelpiece, apparently in meditation. Without thinking, he traced his name on the black mantel, and when Mrs. Brennan called his attention to what he was doing he smiled and asked her pardon.

"It seems strange that people will persist in saying that 'The Raven' was written at the Poe cottage in Fordham, while it is well known that the author did not move to Fordham until 1846, and the poem appeared in the New York 'Mirror,' in January, 1845, and was copied the following month in the 'Review.'

"The mantel upon which Poe scratched his name now adorns the library fireplace of Mr. William Hemstreet, at 1332 Bergen Street, Brooklyn, who bought it when the Brennan homestead was demolished, about twelve years ago.

"Mrs. Manley, a daughter of Patrick Brennan, has the lock from Poe's chamber door. It is an old-fashioned affair and fully six inches long and five wide. Mrs. Manley took it as a souvenir when the Brennan home was taken down.

"The present occupant of the Poe cottage at Fordham makes the assertion that the poem was composed at the latter place, and exhibits to the credulous sightseers the 'very window' where Poe wrote his immortal verses."

[1] The author is indebted to Dr. William Hand Browne, of Baltimore, for this account.

CHAPTER X.

1845.

TALES: POEMS; LONGFELLOW WAR; END OF "THE BROADWAY JOURNAL."

THE year 1845 was, of all Poe's years, perhaps the fullest of work: it was distinguished by the publication of "The Raven," by his editorship of "The Broadway Journal," first as subordinate, then as one-third proprietor, finally as editor and proprietor; the appearance of the complete and, in one sense, final edition of his collected poems; and the collection of twelve of his tales selected and edited (presumably) by Duyckinck, whose name however nowhere appears in the rather shabby-looking volume. Poe's best work had been repeatedly rejected by the Harpers; Lea and Blanchard of Philadelphia had shrewdly accepted and published the two-volume "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" in 1840; and now Wiley and Putnam were to immortalize themselves by issuing the twelve Tales and the Poems. The volume of Tales was without preface, extended to 228 pages, and contained the following title-pages and contents (copied from the original edition):

Tales | by | Edgar A. Poe. | New York: | Wiley and Putnam, 161 Broadway; 1845.

Contents. — The Gold-Bug; The Black Cat; Mesmeric Revelation; Lionizing; The Fall of the House of Usher; A Descent into the Maelström; The

Colloquy of Monos and Una; The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion; The Murders in the Rue Morgue; The Mystery of Marie Rogêt; The Purloined Letter; The Man in the Crowd.

Poe objected strongly to the selection because he thought it revealed his ratiocinative side too exclusively, to the detriment of the romantic, poetic, humorous, and imaginative facets of his many-sided authorship.

His own opinion of his prose work as revealed in the well-known letter to Lowell (July 2, 1844) was as follows:

"My best tales are 'Ligeia,' 'The Gold-Bug,' the 'Murders in the Rue Morgue,' 'The Fall of the House of Usher,' the 'Tell-Tale Heart,' the 'Black Cat,' 'William Wilson,' and the 'Descent into the Maelström'" — "The Gold-Bug" having attained, shortly after its publication, a circulation of 300,000 copies. Only five of these are contained in the Duyckinck collection, which constituted No. 2 of Wiley and Putnam's "Library of American Books."

Early in the year Poe had become entangled in the notorious "Longfellow War," which had smouldered in a subterranean way ever since the publication of "The Haunted Palace" in the "Southern Literary Messenger," followed six weeks later by Longfellow's "Beleaguered City," and now broke out afresh with renewed fury on the occasion of the appearance of Longfellow's "Waif." Poe was an exceedingly alert and zealous critic, frequently, from his monomania on the subject of plagiarism, pouncing on intangible resemblances or haunting reminiscences as the basis of a long argument in favor of this or that poet's "thefts."

Just as his physical machine was extraordinarily irritable and open to influences inapprehensible to less delicate natures, so his moral and intellectual constitution was like an Eolian cord strung between window sashes, vibrating to whispers inaudible to others, continually a-swing with unseen excitements, the prey of stimulations which in some are called madness, in others, genius.

"What the world calls 'genius,'" says he in "A Chapter of Suggestions," "is the state of mental disease arising from the undue predominance of some one of the faculties. The works of such genius are never sound in themselves, and, in especial, always betray the general mental insanity. . . . That poets (using the word comprehensively, as including artists in general) are a *genus irritabile*, is well understood; but the *why*, seems not to be commonly seen. An artist *is* an artist only by dint of his exquisite sense of Beauty — a sense affording him rapturous enjoyment, but at the same time implying or involving, an equally exquisite sense of Deformity, of disproportion. Thus a wrong — an injustice — done a poet who is really a poet, excites him to a degree which, to ordinary apprehension, appears disproportionate with the wrong. Poets *see* injustice *never* where it does not exist — but very often where the unpoetical see no injustice whatever. Thus the poetical irritability has no reference to 'temper' in the vulgar sense, but merely to a more than usual clear-sightedness in respect to wrong: — this clear-sightedness being nothing more than a corollary from the vivid perceptions of right — of justice — of proportion — in a word, of τὸ καλόν. But one thing is clear — that the man who is *not* 'irritable' (to the ordinary apprehension), is *no poet*."

Superadded to these reflections came the fact that Poe had all his life lived too fast, in a seventh heaven of imaginative exaltation, fevered by the continual search for Beauty and the impulse to create it, over-energized by a powerful fancy which made him view things in an unreal, almost spectral, light, haunted psychologically by the pale colors of the spectrum — the violets, purples, blues — that enveloped his spirit in a kind of halo and withdrew it from the warm reds and flesh-colors of life as it really was. Out of this nimbus of encircling glooms he never effectually escaped, and his intellectual view became jaundiced and purblind towards many of his contemporaries.

"There are few men of that peculiar sensibility which is at the root of genius," says he, "who, in early youth, have not expended much of their mental energy in *living too fast;* and, in later years, comes the unconquerable desire to goad the imagination up to that point which it would have attained in an ordinary, normal, or well-regulated life. The earnest longing for artificial excitement, which, unhappily, has characterized too many eminent men, may thus be regarded as a psychal want, or necessity — an effort to regain the lost — a struggle of the soul to assume the position which, under other circumstances, would have been its due."

In his charges of plagiarism brought in "The Evening Mirror" (January 14, 1845) and reiterated in five instalments (beginning March 1) of "The Broadway Journal," against Aldrich, Longfellow, and others, Poe was walking on exceedingly thin ice — very dangerous ground in fact — which easily broke in and threatened to swallow up critic as well as criticised. Undoubtedly the cultured reader of Longfellow is con-

tinually teased by haunting reminiscences of things seen and heard and read before, and the more cultured the reader, the more abounding the haunting reminiscences. Longfellow had access to many languages; he spent years of his life teaching these languages and translating artistically from them; and he would have been more than mortal if assimilable particles of the foreign gold had not clung to his memory and inwrought themselves here and there with the filaments of a most malleable and plastic nature. The student of "The Golden Legend," or of "Keramos," feels "Der Arme Heinrich," the Schiller background, of these poems shimmering through the rich texture of woven gold as the bit of verbal Gobelins is being fingered; but then: is there any absolute originality predicable? do we not see the very story of Genesis rooting itself in the Babylonian tablets, and the tragedy of Faust germinating from the fifteenth century Faust Buch? "Outis" easily turned the tables on Poe and showed how readily the Coleridgean rhythms took on a Poësque tinge when they were arranged in a certain order; and others have shown how the "silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain" might possibly be traceable to the curtains hanging in a certain "Casa Guidi's Windows!"

Poe's criticisms of these poetic contemporaries only made him the more vulnerable in spite of his daily Achillean bath in the waters of self-sufficiency and intellectual pride; and they did not fail to retort on him with cruel detail and pertinacity. The accusation that scenes from "The Spanish Student" imitated parallel scenes from his own "Politian" was altogether unworthy of Poe, and about as true as that Chivers in "Conrad and Eudora," William Gilmore Simms in

"Beauchampe," and Fenno Hoffman in "Greyslaer," all plagiarized from "Politian," because Chivers, Simms, Hoffman, and Poe all drew in common, for their romances and tragedies, from the well-known murder of Sharp, the Solicitor-General of Kentucky, by Beauchampe. Of this murder Poe wrote: "The real events were more impressive than are the fictitious ones. The facts of this remarkable tragedy, as arranged by actual circumstance, would put to shame the skill of the most consummate artist. Nothing was left to the novelist but the amplification of character, and at this point neither the author of 'Greyslaer' nor of 'Beauchampe' is especially *au fait*. The incidents might be better woven into a tragedy."

"Politian" is indeed a delicate idealization of this tragedy, never sufficiently appreciated by the critics.

If Poe, in this ill-tempered and unworthy controversy, had only incidentally called to mind from the stores of his own extensive and accurate reading, Chaucer, all ablaze and a-hum with "reminiscences" of Dante and Boccaccio; Shakspere, with Plutarch and the Celtic romances behind him; Milton saturated with classical savors; and Tennyson, the beloved of his heart, all compact of Homeric and Virgilian memories, he might not have inveighed so fiercely against Longfellow, the gentlest and most lovable of the chameleon school of poets whose very essence it is to color and flavor themselves with what they feed on. Who, at all events, does not prefer the glistening, silken thread of the cocoon to the original mulberry leaf which has furnished it?

Later on, in a mood of penitence, he wrote in "The Literati" notice of James Aldrich, whom he had accused of plagiarizing from Thomas Hood's "The Death-Bed":

"The charge of plagiarism, nevertheless, is a purely literary one; and a plagiarism even distinctly proved by no means necessarily involves any moral delinquency. This proposition applies very especially to what appear to be poetical thefts. The poetic sentiment presupposes a keen appreciation of the beautiful with a longing for its assimilation into the poetic ideality. What the poet intensely admires becomes thus, in very fact, although only partially, a portion of his own soul. Within this soul it has a secondary origination; and the poet, thus possessed by another's thought, cannot be said to take of it possession. But in either view he thoroughly feels it as *his own;* and the tendency to this feeling is counteracted only by the sensible presence of the true, palpable origin of the thought in the volume whence he has derived it — an origin which, in the long lapse of years, it is impossible *not* to forget, should the thought itself, as it often is, be forgotten. But the frailest association will regenerate it; it springs up with all the vigor of a new birth; its absolute originality is not with the poet a matter even of suspicion; and when he has written it, and printed it, and on its account is charged with plagiarism, there will be no one more entirely astounded than himself. Now, from what I have said, it appears that the liability to accidents of this character is in the direct ratio of the poetic sentiment, of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and, in fact, all literary history demonstrates that, for the most frequent and palpable plagiarisms, we must search the works of the most eminent poets."

Corneille and Guillen de Castro, Vergil and Theocritus, Plautus and Menander, Manfred and Faust, Byron and Coleridge, are names that one uncon-

sciously couples together in confirmation of the last sentence.

Poe's other contributions to the magazines during the fourteen months now under consideration were: "The Oblong Box" and "Thou Art the Man" ("Godey's" for September and October), "The Literary Life of Thingum-Bob" ("Southern Literary Messenger" for December), "The Purloined Letter" ("The Gift" for 1845), "Marginalia" ("Democratic Review" for November and December), "The 1002 Tale of Scheherazade" ("Godey," February, 1845), a lecture before the New York Historical Society, February 28, and a connection with "The Broadway Journal," beginning January 4, becoming a co-editorship with Watson and Briggs in March. This connection resulted, during the time that he was co-editor, in the following contributions new and old: "Peter Snook," "The Premature Burial," "Lionizing," "Berenice," "Bon-Bon," "The Oval Portrait," "The Philosophy of Furniture," "Three Sundays in a Week," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Eleonora," "Shadow," "The Assignation," "Morella," "To F——," "The Sleeper" (rejected by O'Sullivan of "The Democratic Review"!), "To One in Paradise," "The Conqueror Worm," review of W. W. Lord, miscellaneous papers on "Anastatic Printing," "Street Paving," and a sour-sweet review of Mrs. Browning's (Miss Barrett's) works.

The "Journal" did not monopolize his busy pen. In the April "Whig Review" appeared "The Doomed City," "The Valley Nis," and "Some Words with a Mummy," "The Power of Words" ("Democratic Review"), "The Facts in the Case

of M. Valdemar" ("Whig Review" — one of the rejected Grotesques), "Eulalie" (July "Whig Review"), "The American Drama" (August "Whig Review"), "The Imp of the Perverse" ("Graham's"), "Dr. Tarr and Prof. Fether" ("Graham's"), "Marginalia I. and II." ("Godey's").

After his assumption of the editorship of the "Broadway Journal, October, 1845, he revised and reprinted many of his former publications: "How to Write a Blackwood Article," "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Literary Life of Thingum-Bob," "The Business Man," "The Man who was Used Up," "Never Bet the Devil your Head," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "William Wilson," "Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling," "The Landscape Garden," "The Tale of Jerusalem," "The Island of the Fay," "MS. Found in a Bottle," "The Duc de l'Omelette," "King Pest," "The Power of Words," "Diddling considered as one of the Exact Sciences," "The Coliseum," "Zante," "Israfel," "Silence," "Science," "Bridal Ballad," "Eulalie," "Lenore," "A Dream," "Catholic Hymn," "Romance," "City in the Sea," "To the River ——," "The Valley of Unrest," "To F——," "To ——," song, "Fairyland," and reviews of Hoyt and Hirst (the young poet who had written a sketch of Poe). Before the year quite ended, and with it (December 26) his editorship, he had added to these, "Some Words with a Mummy," "The Devil in the Belfry," "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," "Four Beasts in One," "The Oblong Box," "Mystification," "Loss of Breath," and "The Spectacles."

The relentless war which Poe waged on Transcen-

dentalism and its votaries in New England — Emerson, Margaret Fuller, William Ellery Channing, and others — came to a violent and rather discreditable culmination in October (one of Poe's astrologically fatal months) of this year. He had been invited with every courtesy, probably at Lowell's instance, to read a poem before the Boston Lyceum on the evening of the 16th; he accepted; but instead of the expected treat he read, "Al Aaraaf," to the vexation and disappointment of his audience, following up the reading however with an artistic recitation of "The Raven." The papers did not hesitate to vent their spleen on the poet, whose "imp of the perverse" was again in the ascendant, and who retorted from New York in a malicious and inexcusable vein of insult. His vilifiers now streamed from lecture-room, lyceum, and periodical press, and hurled their venom on the unfortunate man whose uncurbable tongue was the root of all his misfortunes. He continually confused independence of speech with dogmatic arrogance on questions about which open-minded men might well disagree; and his imperious tone and temper were anything but conciliatory.

Poe had now received the honor of being pirated and reprinted in England, and pirated, quarrelled over, and translated in France: the "Revue des Deux Mondes," the "Charivari," and other French reviews and journals had noticed, copied, or reviewed him, and his Morgue and Mystery Romances had created a profound sensation on the Seine. Charles Baudelaire, author of "Les Fleurs du Mal," took up Poe as a lifelong study and translated him so perfectly as to leave little to be desired; Mallarmé, later, reproduced "The Raven" in magnificent form; and

Poe (Poë, as the Quantin edition prints the name) became a cult with Théophile Gautier and his school.

In a scarce pamphlet now before the writer—"Mesmerism 'in Articulo Mortis,' an Astounding and Horrifying Narrative, shewing the Extraordinary Power of Mesmerism in Arresting the Progress of Death: By Edgar A. Poe, Esq., of New York. London: Short & Co. 1846," we have a curious instance of the intense interest excited by Poe's mesmeric hoax, an interest shared by Miss Barrett and many others, and doubtless heightened by the Advertisement to the pamphlet:

"The following astonishing narrative first appeared in the 'American Magazine,' a work of some standing in the United States, where the case has excited the most intense interest.

"The effects of the mesmeric influence, in this case, were so astounding, so contrary to all past experience, that no one could have possibly anticipated the final result. The narrative, though only a plain recital of facts, is of so extraordinary a nature as almost to surpass belief. It is only necessary to add, that credence is given to it in America, where the occurrence took place."

Poe was certainly the transcendentalist—the Cagliostro—the Apollonius—of the crude practical joke etherealized to a work of art: he juggled with the baubles of science, of the intuitional life, of the Shadowland between sleep and consciousness until, like an Indian fakir, he hoodwinked his gaping audiences before their very faces and made the incredible everyday probabilities.

The crowning achievement, however, of this year of many things accomplished was: "The Raven and

other Poems": New York: Wiley and Putnam: 1845, with its glowing dedication:

"To the Noblest of her Sex — To the Author of 'The Drama of Exile' — To Miss Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, of England, I Dedicate this Volume, with the most Enthusiastic Admiration, and with the most Sincere Esteem. — E. A. P."

The thirty poems of this thin volume (from a copy of the original edition of which we derive these details) are the quintessence of Poe's poetical genius, the decanted spirit of a rare poetic power which was not yet complete indeed, but which was approaching its consummation. "The Raven" alone, of this volume,[1] has given rise to a literature and afforded perhaps the widest discussion of any single poem of its length ever published.

The other poems of the 1845 volume remain as Poe edited them, in their final form for future generations. They had been put through many crucibles of publication and republication — "Southern Literary Messenger," "Graham's," "The Broadway Journal," and what not — until they reached their ultimate crystallization and *avatar* in this form.

"The Broadway Journal," however, was not to extend its fevered and ephemeral existence beyond the year: the January child became the December old man. Appeals to George Poe and others for pecuniary assistance were made in vain; embarrassments came thick and fast though the circulation of the periodical had largely increased, and some things connected

[1] See J. H. Ingram's edition of the poem: London: George Redway: 1885.

with it seemed hopeful. Its collapse was announced the day after Christmas in the following terms: —

Valedictory.— Unexpected engagements demanding my whole attention, and the objects being fulfilled so far as regards myself personally, for which "The Broadway Journal" was established, I now, as its editor, bid farewell — as cordially to foes as to friends.

EDGAR A. POE.

A final number, dated January 3, is said to have been issued under the editorship of Thomas Dunn English.

Among the last words written by Poe this year was the Preface to his Poems: —

Preface.— These trifles are collected and republished chiefly with a view to their redemption from the many improvements to which they have been subjected while going at random "the rounds of the press."[1] If what I have written is to circulate at all, I am naturally anxious that it should circulate as I wrote it. In defence of my own taste, nevertheless, it is incumbent upon me to say, that I think nothing in this volume of much value to the public or very creditable to myself. Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making, at any time, any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion; and the passions should be held in reverence; they must not — they cannot — at will be excited with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations, of mankind.

E. A. P.

[1] Poe slightly changed the form of this sentence in a MS. note to his copy of the Poems.

CHAPTER XI.

1846.

SOCIAL AND LITERARY LIFE IN NEW YORK: THE LITERATI.

It is time now to take a little peep at the social environment by which Poe and his family were surrounded in the winter of 1846, this time through the spectacles of the poet Richard Henry Stoddard, a keen admirer of Poe's genius, but an unsparing foe to what he considers and calls, in season and out of season, Poe's moral delinquencies and mendacity.[1] In a review of Mrs. Botta's (Miss Anne Charlotte Lynch's) Memoirs, he writes:

"The best preparation for reading these Memoirs of Mrs. Botta is a glance over the first forty or fifty names in the series of papers which Edgar Allan Poe contributed, in 1845, to 'The Lady's Book' of L. A. Godey. Familiar with the reputation of the ladies and gentlemen who figure in this list, my acquaintance with Mrs. Botta dates back only forty-four years, when, a timid young person of twenty-four, I was introduced into her salon, either by Dr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, or by Mr. Bayard Taylor. I had scrawled some immature verse, which Mr. Seba Smith and Mrs. Caroline M. Kirkland thought not entirely unworthy of the places which they gave it, one in 'The Rover,' a

[1] *The Independent*, Feb. 1, 1894.

little weekly, the other, in 'The Union Magazine,' a monthly of larger size, with illustrations on wood and steel, mezzotints, if my memory is not at fault, by Mr. John Sartain. Mrs. Botta, who was then Miss Anne Charlotte Lynch, was known to me before the date I have specified through her poems in 'Graham's Magazine' and other periodicals, which were copied in 'The Evening Mirror,' of which Mr. Nathaniel Parker Willis was editor-in-chief, and in 'The New York Tribune,' the critical chair of which was filled by Mr. George Ripley. To meet this accomplished gentlewoman was a distinction, since in meeting her one met her friends, the least of whom was worth knowing. She lived, as nearly as I now recollect, on the south side of Ninth Street, not far from Fifth Avenue, and with her was her elderly mother and a young woman who is now Mrs. S. M. C. Ewer, and was a sister of Mr. Charles Congdon, a brilliant humorist, whom I did not know until ten years later.

"Who witnessed my awkward entrance into Miss Lynch's well-lighted parlor? I have forgotten who they were. I only know that the night was a cold one; late in November, I fancy, and that, chilled through and through, in spite of a thick cloak which I wore, I stooped and chafed my hands before her glowing coal fire. Many a day passed before I heard the last story about my blundering gaucherie on that woful night, — a gaucherie which worsened itself in the sharp eyes of Phyllis, who declared that she wondered at her foolish Corydon. The Willises were there, the poet who wrote 'Scripture Sketches' in his youth, and had written much versatile poetry and prose since — letters from all quarters of the world — his second wife and his daughter Imogen. But before these I see Miss

Lynch, tall, gracious, kindly, the woman that she remained until the cold March morning two years ago when she wandered out into the worlds beyond this work-a-day world of ours. Present, also, were two of the swarming sisterhood of American singers, one elderly spinster [Miss Bogart] who was remembered through one of her solemn lyrics, entitled, I think, 'He came too Late,' and a more hopeful married woman, whose songs were of a more cheerful cast. . . .

"On a later occasion, early in the following spring, I met another singer of tender melodies. She came of a poetic family, for, besides herself, I can recall a sister who wrote fairly well. Born in Boston, child of a merchant there named Locke, Frances Sargent spent a portion of her girlhood where I passed my boyhood, in Hingham, Mass., where, in my seventh year, Mr. William Gilmore Simms improvised his 'Atalantis: A Tale of the Sea.' Miss Locke married a painter named Osgood, with whom she sailed for London, where he drew many celebrities, and she warbled her way into their affections, remembering her native land in her first book, 'A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England.' When I met this gentle lady, seven-and-thirty, or it may be, thirty-eight summers had touched her, lightly, as it seemed, but heavily, as it proved; for, always fragile, she was in a decline, reminding her friends, after her soul had taken its flight, of Young's Narcissa, —

"'She sparkled, exhaled and went to Heaven.'

Mrs. Osgood was a paragon. For, loved of all men who knew her, she was hated by no woman who ever felt the charm of her presence. Poe was enamored of her, felt or fancied that he was, which with him was the

same thing. He dedicated a copy of verses to her, a trifle which had served the same purpose twice before. He concealed her name in an effusion of twenty lines, and he reviewed her in his glowing fashion, and no one disputed the accuracy of his verdict, in her case. But Poe had a rival in her affections in Dr. Griswold, whom she transformed for the moment into an impassioned poet. When Edgar Allan was drugged to death in Baltimore, about six months before the time of which I am writing, I scribbled some verse in his memory; and she was good enough to think some of it not unworthy of its theme. She died a few weeks later. . . .

"I return to the list of names in Poe's 'Literati of New York City,' and recover others whom I saw at Miss Lynch's evenings at home. Constantly there was Mr. W. M. Gillespie, a mathematician of eminence, who stammered in his speech; Dr. J. W. Francis, who knew and was known to everybody, a florid gentleman with flowing white locks; and Ralph Hoyt. Then came Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, poetess, writer of stories, and, later, of three or four novels; and next Mrs. Kirkland, Mrs. Embury, Miss Sedgwick, Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes Smith, and Dr. Thomas Ward, who, under the Horatian signature of 'Flaccus' celebrated 'Passaic, a Group of Poems Touching that River, with other Poems.'

"Greater names were those of Bryant and Halleck, and one lesser, in the person of the bard who entreated the woodman to spare the tree [G. P. Morris]."

In her interesting "Introductory Letter" prefixed to Mr. E. L. Didier's "Life and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe" (W. J. Widdleton: 1876), Mrs. Whitman writes:

"During the whole of the winter 1845–46, he was residing in the city of New York — I think in Amity Street. He was, at that time, a frequent visitor and ever-welcome guest at the houses of many persons with whom I have long been intimately acquainted — among others, the Hon. John R. Bartlett . . . and Miss Anne C. Lynch, now Mrs. Botta — who were accustomed to receive informally at their houses, on stated evenings, the best intellectual society of the city. To reinforce my memory on the subject, I have just referred to letters received from various correspondents in New York, during the winters of 1845 and 1846, in all of which the name of the poet frequently occurs.

"In one of these letters, dated January 20, 1846, the writer says: 'Speaking of our receptions, I must tell you what a pleasant one we had on Saturday evening, in Waverley Place; or rather I will tell you the names of some of the company, and you will *know*, among others, that of Cassius Clay, Mr. Hart, the sculptor, who is doing Henry Clay in marble; Halleck, Locke (the Man in the Moon), Hunt, of the "Merchant's Magazine"; Hudson, Mr. Bellows, Poe, Headley, Miss Sedgwick, Mrs. Kirkland, Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Seba Smith, Mrs. Ellet, and many others more or less distinguished.'

"One of these letters, in which the date of the year is wanting, alludes to a controversy, which took place at one of the soirées between Margaret Fuller (Ossoli) and Poe, about some writer whom, in her lofty, autocratic way, the lady had been annihilating. Miss Fuller was then writing critical papers for the 'New York Tribune.' Poe, espousing the cause of the vanquished, with a few keen, incisive rejoinders, ob-

tained such ascendancy over the eloquent and oracular woman, that somebody whispered, 'The Raven has perched upon the casque of Pallas, and pulled all the feathers out of her cap.'

"In another letter, dated January 7, 1846, I find the following: 'I meet Mr. Poe very often at the receptions. He is the observed of all observers. His stories are thought wonderful, and to hear him repeat "The Raven," which he does very quietly, is an event in one's life. People seem to think there is something uncanny about him, and the strangest stories are told, and, what is more, *believed*, about his mesmeric experiences, at the mention of which he always smiles. His smile is captivating! . . . Everybody wants to know him; but only a few people seem to get well acquainted with him.'

"This was in the spring of 1846, when Poe was at the very acme of his literary and social success among the *literati* of New York."

And how, one may ask, did Poe comport himself among the *illuminati* of this defunct and mutually admiring generation?

"As a conversationist," remarks Mrs. Whitman, "we do not remember his equal. We have heard the veteran Landor (called by high authority the best talker in England) discuss with scathing sarcasm the popular writers of the day, convey his political animosities by fierce invectives on the 'pretentious coxcomb Albert' and 'the cunning knave Napoleon,' or describe, in words of strange depths and tenderness, the peerless charm of goodness, and the *naïve* social graces in the beautiful mistress of Gore House, 'the most gorgeous Lady Blessington.' We have heard the Howadji talk of the gardens of Damascus till the

air seemed purpled and perfumed with its roses. We have listened to the trenchant and vivid talk of the Autocrat; to the brilliant and exhaustless colloquial resources of John Neal and Margaret Fuller. We have heard the racy talk of Orestes Brownson in the old days of his freedom and power, have listened to the serene wisdom of Alcott, and treasured up memorable sentences from the golden lips of Emerson. Unlike the conversational power evinced by any of these, was the earnest, opulent, unpremeditated speech of Edgar Poe.

"Like his writings, it presented a combination of qualities rarely met with in the same person, —a cool, decisive judgment, a wholly unconventional courtesy and sincere grace of manner, and an imperious enthusiasm, which brought all hearers within the circle of its influence.

"J. M. Daniel, Esq., United States Minister at Turin, who knew Poe well during the last years of his life, says of him: 'His conversation was the very best we have ever listened to. We have never heard any so suggestive of thought, or any from which one gained so much. On literary criticism it was the essence of correct and profound criticism divested of all formal pedantries and introductory ideas — the kernel clear of the shell. He was not a brilliant talker in the common, after-dinner sense of the word; he was not a maker of fine points, or a frequent sayer of funny things. What he said was prompted entirely by the moment, and seemed uttered for the pleasure of uttering it. In his animated moods he talked with an abstracted earnestness, as if he were dictating to an amanuensis; and, if he spoke of individuals, his ideas ran upon their moral and intellectual qualities, rather

than upon the idiosyncrasies of their active, visible phenomena, or the peculiarities of their manner.'

"We have said that the charm of his conversation consisted in its genuineness, its wonderful directness, and sincerity. We believe, too, that, in the artistic utterance of poetic emotion, he was at all times passionately genuine. His proud reserve, his profound melancholy, his unworldliness — may we not say his *unearthliness* — of nature made his character one very difficult of comprehension to the casual observer. The complexity of his intellect, its incalculable resources, and his masterly control of those resources when brought into requisition for the illustration of some favorite theme or cherished creation, led to the current belief that its action was purely arbitrary, that he could write without emotion or earnestness at the deliberate dictation of the will." [1]

The year 1846 was the beginning of Poe's "descent" into the moral and physical "Maelström," in which he was finally swallowed up. All his brilliant literary and social successes had been in vain, had proved incapable of lifting him to a prosperous plane, had made him indeed only a shining mark for malice and malignity.

"In his white ideal
All statue-blind."

Even while he was frequenting these delightful *salons*, with his gentle Virginia by his side, he was personally and anatomically studying its frequenters with a view to presenting them in full-length life-like

[1] Mrs. Whitman, "Edgar Poe," &c., pp. 36–38.

portraits for the fashionable journal of a neighboring city.

"In the series of papers which I now propose," he writes, in his Introduction, "my design is, in giving my own unbiassed opinion of the *literati* (male and female) of New York, to give at the same time very closely, if not with absolute accuracy, that of conversational society in literary circles. It must be expected, of course, that, in innumerable particulars, I shall differ from the voice, that is to say, what appears to be the voice, of the public; but this is a matter of no consequence whatever.

"New York literature may be taken as a fair representation of that of the country at large. The city is itself the focus of American letters. Its authors include, perhaps, one-fourth of all in America, and the influence they exert on their brethren, if seemingly silent, is not the less extensive and decisive. As I shall have to speak of many individuals, my limits will not permit me to speak of them otherwise than in brief; but this brevity will be merely consistent with the design, which is that of simple opinion, with little of either argument or detail. With one or two exceptions, I am well acquainted with every author to be introduced. . . . Each individual is introduced absolutely at random."

Thirty-eight of these accomplished gentlemen and gentlewomen of a past generation pass panoramically before us, make their brief curtsy, and, as briefly, pass into the oblivion devoted to the Dilettanti. Poe's manner is sharp, French, epigrammatic; the crisp distinction of his style, the absolutely lucid form of his statement in these papers, has never been surpassed and seldom equalled; and yet he contrives to bring within

it just enough of the vanishing personality of his subject to pique attention and avoid offence.

Only a few reputations were assailed by the critic: coarse personalities were altogether absent; the women were treated with chivalrous respect and discrimination — even the dreaded Margaret Fuller was discussed with Castilian courtesy; and the fellow-journalists — Briggs, Willis, Colton, Hoffman, Locke — were almost universally appreciated and praised. Notes of discord sounded in the case of Aldrich and "Thomas Dunn Brown" and Lewis Gaylord Clark. "Mr. Clark, as a literary man, has about him no determinateness, no distinctiveness, no saliency of point; an apple, in fact, or a pumpkin has more angles. He is as smooth as oil, or a sermon from Dr. Hawkes; he is noticeable for nothing in the world except for the markedness by which he is noticeable for nothing."

Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Child, Miss Sedgwick, Miss Bogart, Miss Lynch, Mrs. Embury, Mrs. Kirkland, Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs. Mowatt, and Margaret Fuller are the "immortelles" beaded on Poe's eternal scroll; Halleck, Willis, and Fenno Hoffman (founder of "The Knickerbocker") are the only poets still distinguishable from the throng of minor contemporaries.

It is a curious fact that the two great historic foes of this period of American literature should also have been the Supreme Court of the time for the adjudication of literary reputations. Griswold revelled in anthologies, in volumes of prose and poetical selections, in old-fashioned *florilegiums* and "elegant extracts" sealed with the seven seals of Solomon's wisdom. Poe was the taster — and tester — in these cellars of Amontillado, often delicately and derisively sceptical of its

being Amontillado at all. Both men were phenomenally industrious, and both have left monuments of erudition. Rivals even in their surreptitious loves, they worked shoulder to shoulder in the bustling forties amid the noise of presidential campaigns and the far-off mutterings of the Mexican War; and the one bequeathed his reputation to the other — to be ravenously devoured! Griswold's cohort of friends — Horace Greeley, Raymond, Hoffman, Donald G. Mitchell, Bayard Taylor, C. G. Leland, the Carys, James T. Fields, etc., was offset by Poe's cohort of foes made in his self-imposed task as a *censor morum* of more than Catonian severity. Vermont and Virginia were certainly reflected in their temperaments: the one keen, cold, incisive, indefatigable, resourceful, devoting an entire lifetime to the altruistic presentation of others' claims to literary recognition, a Dryasdust of a superior kind whose labors in collecting and in commentary were informed by an intelligent spirit, if not by a flaming zeal; the other, warm, imaginative, high-strung, impelled by an irresistible genius that never let him rest, imperiously creative, haughtily egotistic, forced rather to the presentation of his own claims than to the recognition of others.

CHAPTER XII.

1846–1847.

FORDHAM: THE DEATH OF VIRGINIA POE.

The sensation caused by the successive issues of "The Literati" was very great, and when the series reached "Thomas Dunn Brown" [English], a violent explosion ensued. English published in "The Evening Mirror" (then managed by Fuller & Co.) a libellous and slanderous article, full of filth and indecency, accusing Poe of forgery, theft, and drunkenness: "he is not alone thoroughly unprincipled, base, and depraved, but silly, vain, and ignorant, — not alone an assassin in morals, but a quack in literature," etc., etc.

It is needless to say that Poe brought suit and recovered damages for defamation of character. The old gentleman (author of "Ben Bolt" and ex-member of the United States Congress) died in Newark April 1, 1902.

The controversy,[1] coarse and abusive as it was on both sides, had one good consequence for Poe: it resulted in a verdict of $225 in his favor, the costs and all running up a bill of $492 for the other party. With this money, apparently, Poe furnished the little

[1] English's letter appeared in the New York *Mirror* of June 23–July 13, 1846, and Poe's reply in the Philadelphia *Spirit of the Times* July 10, 1846. See Vol. XVII. p. 233.

Dutch cottage at Fordham, Westchester Co., New York, a suburb of the city, whither he now moved from Amity Street.

Mr. F. M. Hopkins thus describes the little home in "The Review of Reviews" for April, 1896:

"At the top of Fordham Hill, on the Kingsbridge Road, in the recently annexed or northern district of New York City, is a little old Dutch cottage known to fame as the home of Edgar Allan Poe during the last four [three ?] years of his life. The building is a small one containing only three rooms, a porch extending along its entire front, and standing with its gable end to the street. Instead of being clapboarded, it was shingled, as was customary in the early days in which it was built, making a good specimen of the dignified little homes that dotted northern New York, but which have almost wholly disappeared before the march of modern improvements.

"In Poe's time the cottage was pleasantly situated on a little elevation in a large open space, with cherry-trees about it. Many literary workers of his day visited him here, and mention was quite frequently made of the cosy home which Virginia Poe made, notwithstanding her limited means and contracted quarters. The surroundings have somewhat changed with passing years. The cherry-trees are gone, and neighboring houses elbow the cottage quite closely, but the poet's old home remains the same as a half century ago, aside from the neglect of recent years.

"The hallway entrance leads directly to the main room of the house, — a good-sized, cheerful apartment with four windows, two opening on the porch. Between these stood the poet's table, at which much of his reading and editorial work was done. In the little

sleeping-room facing towards the street, Virginia died.[1] At the left of the little hallway is an old-fashioned winding staircase to the attic above. In this low-roofed room Poe had a writing-table and his meagre library. Here in seclusion his more ambitious work was done. The musical 'Bells,' the pathetic 'Annabel Lee,' the weird 'Ulalume,' and the enigmatic 'Eureka,' as well as some of his best fiction were written here."

Hither, then, came the poet in the early summer of 1846, while the "Literati" excitement was raging, and here doubtless many of the articles were written.

Mrs. Whitman, in a few words describing these "lonesome latter years," paints graphically the charm of the new residence:

"It is well known to those acquainted with the parties, that the young wife of Edgar Poe [she was only twenty-four or five] died of lingering consumption, which manifested itself even in her girlhood. All who have had opportunities for observation in the matter have noticed her husband's tender devotion to her during her prolonged illness. . . . It is true that, notwithstanding her vivacity and cheerfulness at the time we have alluded to, her health was even then rapidly sinking; and it was for her dear sake, and for the recovery of that peace which had been so fatally perilled amid the irritations and anxieties of his New York life, that Poe left the city, and removed to the little Dutch cottage in Fordham, where he passed the three remaining years of his life. It was to this quiet haven, in the beautiful spring of 1846, when the fruit-trees were all in bloom and the grass in its

[1] She died, according to all descriptions, upstairs, in a room where the ceiling sloped.

freshest verdure, that he brought his Virginia to die. Here he watched her failing breath in loneliness and privation through many solitary moons, until, on a desolate, dreary day of the ensuing winter, he saw her remains borne from beneath its lowly roof to a neighboring cemetery. It was towards the close of the year following her death, his most "immemorial year," that he wrote the strange threnody of "Ulalume." This poem, perhaps the most original and weirdly suggestive of all his poems, resembles at first sight some of Turner's landscapes, being apparently 'without form and void, and having darkness on the face of it.' It is, nevertheless, in its basis, although not in the precise correspondence of time, simply historical. Such was the poet's lonely midnight walk; such, amid the desolate memories and sceneries of the hour, was the newborn hope enkindled within his heart at sight of the morning star —

"'Astarte's bediamonded crescent —'

coming up as the beautiful harbinger of love and happiness yet awaiting him in the untried future; and such the sudden transition of feeling, the boding dread, that supervened on discovering that which had at first been unnoted — that it shone, as if in mockery or in warning, directly over the sepulchre of the lost 'Ulalume.'

"A writer in the 'London Critic,' after quoting the opening stanzas of 'Ulalume,' says: 'These to many will appear only *words*. But what wondrous words! What a spell they wield! What a withered unity there is in them! The instant they are uttered, a misty picture, with a tarn dark as a murderer's eye below, and the thin yellow leaves of October fluttering

above, — exponents of a misery which scorns the name of sorrow, — is hung up in the chambers of your soul forever.'

"An English writer, now living in Paris [1860], the author of some valuable contributions to our American periodicals, passed several weeks at the little cottage in Fordham in the early autumn of 1847, and described to us, with a truly English appreciativeness, its unrivalled neatness, and the quaint simplicity of its interior and surroundings. It was at the time bordered by a flower-garden, whose clumps of rare dahlias and brilliant beds of fall flowers showed, in the careful culture bestowed upon them, the fine floral taste of the inmates.

"An American writer who visited the cottage during the summer of the same year [1847], described it as half buried in fruit-trees, and having a thick grove of pines in its immediate neighborhood. The proximity of the railroad, and the increasing population of the little village, have since wrought great changes in the place. Round an old cherry-tree, near the door, was a broad bank of greenest turf. The neighboring beds of mignonette and heliotrope, and the pleasant shade above, made this a favorite seat. Rising at four o'clock in the morning for a walk to the magnificent Aqueduct bridge over Harlem River, our informant found the poet, with his mother, standing on the turf beneath the cherry-tree, eagerly watching the movements of two beautiful birds that seemed contemplating a settlement in its branches. He had some rare tropical birds in cages, which he cherished and petted with assiduous care. Our English friend described him as giving to his birds and his flowers a delighted attention that seemed quite inconsistent with the gloomy

and grotesque character of his writings. A favorite cat, too, enjoyed his friendly patronage; and often, when he was engaged in composition, it seated itself on his shoulder, purring as in complacent approval of the work proceeding under its supervision.

"During Mr. Poe's residence at Fordham, a walk to High Bridge was one of his favorite and habitual recreations. The water of the Aqueduct is conveyed across the river on a range of lofty granite arches, which rise to the height of 145 feet above high-water level. On the top a turfed and grassy road, used only by foot-passengers and flanked on either side by a low parapet of granite, makes one of the finest promenades imaginable.

"'The winding river, and the high, rocky shores at the western extremity of the bridge, are seen to great advantage from this lofty avenue. In the last melancholy years of his life — 'the lonesome latter years' — Poe was accustomed to walk there at all times of the day and night, often pacing the then solitary pathway for hours without meeting a human being. A little to the east of the cottage rises a ledge of rocky ground, partly covered with pines and cedars, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country, and of the picturesque college of St. John's, which had at that time in its neighborhood venerable old trees. This rocky ledge was also one of the poet's favorite resorts. Here through the long summer days, and through solitary, star-lit nights, he loved to sit, dreaming his gorgeous waking dreams, or pondering the deep problems of 'The Universe,' — that grand 'prose poem' to which he devoted the last and maturest energies of his wonderful intellect."

Along with the "Literati" sketches of this sum-

mer went "The Philosophy of Composition," and instalments of "Marginalia" to "Graham's" and "The Democratic Review," for collecting and publishing which Poe has been taunted by a recent biographer, because some of them consisted of paragraphs already used in his printed reviews of this or that notability — or nonentity. The fact is, that the "Marginalia" and the neglected "Pinakidia" of the early "Southern Literary Messenger" are among the most interesting products of Poe's mind, giving his most intimate thoughts about men and things, treasuring his favorite quotations from a wide world of reading, and singling out remarkable sayings such as one finds imbedded in the prose of Pascal or the maxims of La Rochefoucauld. In them Poe often strikingly exemplifies his powers of sarcasm, satire, pith and epigram, not to speak of his sardonic humor — a mental feature altogether denied Poe by one of his most sympathetic critics — James Hannay.[1] "He has, for instance, no Humor — had little sympathy with the various forms of human life. But he is perfectly poetic in his own province. If his circle was a narrow, it was a magic one. His poetry is sheer poetry, and borrows nothing from without, as Didactic Poetry does. For Didactic Poetry he had a very strong and very justifiable dislike."

This same critic singularly errs when he says (in the first of the following sentences): "Traces of spiritual emotion are not to be found there [in his youthful poems]. Sorrow there is, but not divine sorrow. There is not any approach to the Holy — to the Holiness which mingles with all Tennyson's

[1] The Poetical Works of Edgar Allan Poe, by James Hannay: London, 1863.

poetry — as the Presence with the Wine. And yet, when you view his poems simply as poems, this characteristic does not make itself felt as a Want. It would seem as if he had only to deal with the Beautiful as a human aspirant. His soul thirsted for the 'supernal loveliness.' That thirst was to him Religion — all the Religion you discover in him. But if we cannot call him religious, we may say that he supplies the materials to worship. You want flowers and fruit for your altar; and wherever Poe's muse has passed, flowers and fruits are fairer and brighter.

"With all this passion for the Beautiful, no poet was ever less voluptuous. He never profaned his genius whatever else he profaned. 'Irene,' 'Ulalume,' 'Lenore,' 'Annabel Lee,' 'Annie,' are all gentle, and innocent, and fairy-like. A sound of music — rising as from an unseen Ariel — brings in a most pure and lovely figure,— sad, usually; so delicate and dreamy are these conceptions, that, indeed, they hint only of some transcendent beauty — some region where passion has no place, where

"'Music, and moonlight, and feeling are one,'

as Shelley says.

"Poe loved splendour — he delighted in the gorgeous — in ancient birth — in tropical flowers — in southern birds — in castellated dwellings. The hero of his 'Raven' sits on a 'violet velvet lining'; they have 'crested palls.' He delighted, as Johnson said of Collins, 'to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.' His scenery is everywhere magnificent. His Genius is always waited upon with the splendour of an Oriental monarch."

The "Marginalia" of which we have been speaking were in all likelihood paragraphs originally transferred from Poe's note-books to this or that review as occasion called for them, and then reclaimed from these reviews for an independent purpose, later.

"We know now that the charge," says Mr. Appleton Morgan, "that Poe resold his manuscripts is a lie, circumstantially nailed by the publisher, still fortunately living, from whose reminiscences the allegation originated. This publisher did, it seems, pay Poe three times for three versions of 'The Bells,' himself insisting on so doing, because the poems were substantially distinct pieces. The statement that Poe stole the theme, metre, rhythm, and technique of 'The Raven' from a certain lunatic in a certain madhouse has also fallen to the ground, it having been ascertained that there never was either such a lunatic or such a madhouse.

"The truth is, perhaps, that Poe's greatest crime was his poverty — often abject, and always extreme."

Echoes of this misery reverberated pathetically through the Griswold correspondence. "I know nothing of the Poe family," writes Miss M. L. Seward to Mrs. Osgood, New York, November 23d, 1846, "except that they are in great poverty."

"The Poes are in the same state of physical and pecuniary suffering — indeed worse, than they were last summer," writes Mrs. M. E. Hewitt to the same correspondent, under date of December 20, 1846; "for now the cold weather is added to their accumulation of ills. I went to inquire of Mr. Post [publisher of the "Columbian Magazine"] about them. He confirmed all that I had previously heard of their condition. Although he says Mrs. Clemm has never

told him they were in want, yet she borrows a shilling often, *to get a letter from the office* — but Mrs. Gove has been to see the Poes and found them living in the greatest wretchedness. I am endeavoring to get up a contribution for them among the editors, — and the matter has got into print — very much to my regret, as I fear it will hurt Poe's pride to have his affairs made so public."

Almost the last day of this distressful year (December 29th), Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote to Griswold: —

"I hope you will do whatever you can to favor Mr. Poe in the matter of which he spoke to you in his letter. . . . I have always thought Mr. Poe entertained a favorable opinion of me since he taught me how to scan one of my own poems. And I am not ashamed, though it may be very unphilosophical, to be grateful for his good opinion, and even venture to hope that he may find something to approve in one or two of my last poems."

Poe was only too eager to welcome young talent like that of Holmes, Bayard Taylor, the Davidson sisters, and others; even from the depths of his blackest misery he had evidently written for a copy of Holmes's poems with a view to a notice of them.

Mrs. Gove-Nichols (whom, as Mrs. Gove, Poe had reviewed sympathetically in "The Literati") gives us a pathetic glimpse of Poe and of Virginia's last month about this time:

"Poe's voice was melody itself. He always spoke low, when in a violent discussion, compelling his hearers to listen if they would know his opinion, his facts, fancies, or philosophy, or his weird imaginings. These last usually flowed from his pen, seldom from his tongue.

"On this occasion I was introduced to the young wife of the poet, and to the mother, then more than sixty years of age. She was a tall, dignified old lady, with a most lady-like manner, and her black dress, though old and much worn, looked really elegant on her. She wore a widow's cap, of the genuine pattern, and it suited excellently with her snow-white hair. Her features were large, and corresponded with her stature, and it seemed strange how such a stalwart and queenly woman could be the mother of her *petite* daughter. Mrs. Poe looked very young; she had large black eyes, and a pearly whiteness of complexion which was a perfect pallor. Her pale face, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair, gave her an unearthly look. One felt that she was almost a dissolved spirit, and when she coughed it was made certain that she was rapidly passing away.

"The mother seemed hale and strong, and appeared to be a sort of universal Providence to her strange children.

"The cottage had an air of taste and gentility that must have been lent to it by the presence of its inmates. So neat, so poor, so unfurnished, and yet so charming, a dwelling I never saw. The floor of the kitchen was white as wheaten flour. A table, a chair, and a little stove that it contained, seemed to furnish it completely. The sitting-room floor was laid with check matting; four chairs, a light stand, and a hanging book-shelf composed its furniture. There were pretty presentation copies of books on the little shelves, and the Brownings had posts of honour on the stand. With quiet exultation Poe drew from his side-pocket a letter he had recently received from Elizabeth Barrett (Browning). He read it to us. It was very flattering. She

told Poe that his "poem of the Raven had awakened a fit [of] horror in England. This was what he loved to do." [1] . . .

"The autumn came, and Mrs. Poe sank rapidly in consumption," continues Mrs. Gove-Nichols. "I saw her in her bed-chamber. Everything here was so neat, so purely clean, so scant and poverty-stricken, that I saw the poor sufferer with such a heart-ache. . . . There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw-bed, wrapped in her husband's great-coat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer's only means of warmth; except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet.

"Mrs. Clemm was passionately fond of her daughter, and her distress on account of her illness and poverty was dreadful to see.

"As soon as I was made aware of these painful facts, I came to New York and enlisted the sympathies and services of a lady, whose heart and hand were ever open to the poor and miserable. A feather bed and abundance of bed-clothing and other comforts were the first-fruits of my labour of love. The lady headed a private subscription, and carried them $60 the next week. From the day this kind lady saw the suffering family of the poet, she watched over them as a mother watches over her babe. She saw them often, and ministered to the comfort of the dying and the living." [2]

[1] Ingram, II., p. 91. [2] Ibid., p. 97.

This angel of mercy was Marie Louise Shew (afterwards Mrs. Houghton), to whom Poe addressed the beautiful lines in "The Home Journal" for March 13, 1847:

TO M. L. S——

Of all who hail thy presence as the morning;
Of all to whom thy absence is the night,
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun; of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope, for life, ah! above all,
For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
In truth, in virtue, in humanity;
Of all who, on despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, "Let there be light!"
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes;
Of all who owe thee most, whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship, oh, remember,
The truest, the most fervently devoted,
And think that these weak lines are written by him:
By him, who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

In March, 1848, Poe again addressed the passionate lines "To —— ——," beginning:

> "Not long ago the writer of these lines,
> In the mad pride of intellectuality,
> Maintained 'the power of words' ——"

to this same lady, thus evincing his eternal gratitude for her goodness to his dying wife. It is to her that we owe the first suggestion of "The Bells."

The pitiable condition of the family got into print: the ever-ready Willis heard of it and printed an appeal in "The Home Journal" for help; which brought forth a painful protest from Poe at thus having his private affairs thrust upon the public. He might die of starvation, like Otway and Spenser, but he did not wish the public to know anything about it. Thirty days after his letter of protest was written Virginia actually did die, January 30, 1847.

The day before the sad event he wrote as follows to Mrs. Shew:

FORDHAM, Jan. 29, '47.

KINDEST — DEAREST FRIEND — My poor Virginia yet lives, although failing fast and now suffering much pain. May God grant her life until she sees you and thanks you once again! Her bosom is full to overflowing — like my own — with a boundless — inexpressible gratitude to you. Lest she may never see you more — she bids me say that she sends you her sweetest kiss of love and will die blessing you. But come — oh, come to-morrow! Yes! I *will* be calm — everything you so nobly wish to see me. My mother sends you, also, her "warmest love and thanks." She begs me to ask you, if possible, to make arrangements at home so that you may stay with us to-morrow night. I enclose the order to the Postmaster.

Heaven bless you and farewell,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

Mrs. Shew attended to the last sad rites of the dead, and Virginia was temporarily placed in the family vault of the Valentines, in the Reformed Church at Fordham.

Any one who remembers the awful vividness with which Poe has depicted the slow consuming away of

[1] Ingram, II., p. 107.

a beloved one through a lingering illness, in the illuminated pages of "Ligeia," "Morella" and "Eleonora" lit by sepulchral lamps, wherein every footfall of the approach of "The Conqueror Worm" is delineated with muffled yet magical detail; every one to whose soul have penetrated the melodious dirges of "Ulalume," "Lenore," and "The Raven," which assume in their writhings almost the agonizing grace of the Laocoön, must realize, faintly indeed yet sympathetically, the abysmal grief into which this death must have plunged the greatest Artist of Death whom the world has ever seen, the man who most keenly and most wonderfully has conjured up its horrors before the quailing imagination and made them stand, instinct with their own quivering and hideous life, before the recoiling eye of the mind. The half-frantic mood of the time may be read in the mystic interlineations of "Ulalume," peeping between the lines of this mad yet most musical autobiographic poem that is wreathed with the opiate vapors of frenzy.

"Deprived of the companionship and sympathy of his child-wife," writes a friendly biographer,[1] "the poet suffered what to him was the exquisite agony of utter loneliness. Night after night he would arise from his sleepless pillow, and, dressing himself, wander to the grave of his lost one, and throwing himself down upon the cold ground, weep bitterly for hours at a time.

"The same haunting dread which we have ventured to ascribe to him at the time of his writing 'The Raven,' possessed him now, and to such a degree that he found it impossible to sleep without the presence of some friend by his bedside. Mrs. Clemm, his ever-

[1] W. F. Gill, Chatto and Windus, London, 1878.

devoted friend and comforter, more frequently fulfilled the office of watcher. The poet, after retiring, would summon her, and while she stroked his broad brow, he would indulge his wild flights of fancy to the Aidenn of his dreams. He never spoke nor moved in these moments, unless the hand was withdrawn from his forehead; then he would say, with childish naïveté, 'No, no, not yet!' — while he lay with half-closed eyes.

"The mother, or friend, would stay by him until he was fairly asleep, then gently leave him."

The excesses to which the ruptured throat of his wife had impelled him in Philadelphia, and all through the five years preceding her death, with their alternations of hope and despair, now ended in a settled gloom that threatened his reason: henceforth Poe was a broken man, an unstrung harp wildly and wistfully singing of things long gone by, a "seraph-harper Israfel" that had lost his harp or sat discrowned and disconsolate among the asphodels. A few uneven things, a few weird and beautiful threnodies, and the great prose-poem "Eureka," were practically all that Death and Grief had left him to utter, now that the inspiration of his life had gone and the home of his heart was built up against her tomb. A radiant joy indeed broke fitfully on the poet late in these latter years, but this, too, was doomed to extinction, and soon hung, like his trembling Astarte, directly over a grave. The excesses, brought on by extreme anguish and straitened circumstances, were only too real though never habitual, never *bacchanalia* of mere maudlin sensuality such as one reads of in the annals of drunken Elizabethans: they were the ups and downs, the uneven tight-rope walking of a nature trying to balance

itself amid impossible conditions and morbid neurotic states, wrung from its natural rectitude by overpowering temptation to seek relief in stimulants — coffee, wine, drugs, opium, anything that would soothe the intense malaise. Alas, how full of Verlaines and de Mussets and Baudelaires the world has been — men like Poe, endowed with preternaturally sensitive nerves, unable to grapple with the coarse flesh-and-blood around them, pierced on all sides by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and succumbing at last to the superincumbent mass of misery.

Poor little Virginia lay for many years in the borrowed tomb, but now at last rests beside her husband in Westminster Church grave-yard, Baltimore, underneath the Poe monument.

CHAPTER XIII.

1848.

"EUREKA."

Owing to Mrs. Shew's untiring efforts, Poe's friends (including General Winfield Scott) raised about $100 and helped to pay the debts incurred by long illness. He himself seems to have been desperately ill and unnerved for a long time after Virginia's death and never really recovered from the shock. A famous New York physician (Dr. Mott) diagnosed the case, apparently agreeing with Mrs. Shew (who had been medically educated and was a doctor's only daughter), that Poe was suffering from a lesion of one side of the brain which would not permit him to use stimulants or tonics without producing insanity.

"I did not feel much hope," says the lady in her diary,[1] "that he could be raised up from brain fever brought on by extreme suffering of mind and body — actual want and hunger, and cold having been borne by this heroic husband in order to supply food, medicine, and comforts to his dying wife — until exhaustion and lifelessness were so near at every reaction of the fever, that even sedatives had to be administered with extreme caution."

He clung pathetically to the little Dutch cottage, went out little and wrote less; and yet this year of trouble

[1] Ingram, II., 115.

is the one — 1847 — in which his great prose-poem of "Eureka" began to dawn on him as he walked the piazza, looked out on the immeasurable "field of the cloth of gold" of stars, and speculated eagerly and philosophically about its future. Again "The Stylus" — his teasing evil genius — crops up and impels him to lecture and work for funds for its resuscitation.

That he was not wholly idle this almost fatal year, in spite of the long and depressing illnesses that repeatedly brought him to death's door, may be seen from the following unaddressed MS. letter in possession of the University of Virginia:

New York, August 10, 1847.

Dear Sir, — Permit me to thank you, in the first place, very sincerely, for your considerate kindness to me while in Philadelphia. Without your aid, at the precise moment and in the precise manner in which you rendered it, it is more than probable that I should not now be alive to write you this letter. Finding myself exceeding ill — so much so that I had no hope except in getting home immediately — I made several attempts to see Mr. Graham, and at last saw him for a few minutes just as he was about returning to Cape May. He was very friendly — more so than I have ever known him, and requested me to write continuously for the Mag. As you were not present, however, and it was uncertain when I could see you, I obtained an advance of $10 from Mr. G. in order that I might return home at once — and thinking it, also, more proper to leave you time in which to look over the articles.

I would be deeply obliged if you could now give me an answer respecting them. Should you take both, it would render me, just now, the most important service. I owe Mr. G. about $50. The articles, at the old price ($4 per page), will come to $190 — so that, if you write

me that they are accepted, I propose to draw on Mr. G. for $40 — thus squaring our account.

P. S. — I settled my bill with Arbuckle before leaving Phil., but am not sure how much I owe yourself for the previous bill, etc.

Please let me know.

Very gratefully your friend,

EDGAR A. POE.

The same "immemorial year" was sealed, in December, with the anonymous publication, in "The American Whig Review," of the mystic "Ulalume," reprinted by Willis, at Poe's request, in "The Home Journal," with remarks on its "exquisitely piquant and skilful exercise of rarity and niceness of language," "a curiosity in philologic flavor." The "Union Magazine" had rejected the poem, as other magazines or publishers had rejected or held up many of Poe's best things — "The Sleeper," "The Gold-Bug," "The Bells," etc., and the "Tales" in volume form.

Poe's work was so strange, so extraordinary, so original as it towered and sparkled in columnar beauty amid the flat commonplace of the time, that it is no wonder if editors were startled and looked askance, as they looked askance at "Jane Eyre," at Carlyle's "French Revolution," at Lamartine's "Jacqueline." Willis was one of the few editors of the time who appreciated Poe at his exact value, and gave him unstinted praise to the last. The rest gazed at him — Graham, and, it may be, Lowell excepted — as one might imagine the aborigines of Nubia gazing at the gorgeous bark of Cleopatra as it swept flashing down the Nile with all its oriental splendor and paraphernalia, a vision of light, perfume, and beauty.

Dark as the year preceding this had been, it had shot a ray of sunshine athwart the poet's path before Virginia's death in the shape of hearty recognition abroad. About the time the Godey sketches were running out, and literary Manhattan began to breathe a sigh of relief, the "Revue des Deux Mondes" printed a highly appreciative review of the Tales of 1845, which was followed by Mme. Gabrielle Mennier's translation of the best of them. A disgraceful squabble indeed had arisen between two Parisian papers — "Le Commerce" and "La Quotidienne" — soon after the publication of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," in April, 1841, in which it was shown that "Le Commerce" had stolen Poe's tale from the "Charivari," and republished it as an original *feuilleton* under the title of "L'Orang-Otang." This, in turn, was stolen by "La Quotidienne" and transferred to its columns; whereupon a lawsuit ensued, when the source of the theft was shown to be Poe's tale published shortly before in "Graham's."

And now, recently, a writer in "Notes and Queries" (May 12, 1894) comes forward to show that Poe probably stole *his* tale from an incident recorded in the "Shrewsbury Chronicle," apropos of "a ribbon-faced baboon" that had been taught to "burgle"! "The Case of M. Valdemar" was traced to one Miss Prevorst, the "William Wilson" to "The Man with Two Lives" (Boston, 1829), and to Calderon; the germ of "Metzengerstein" was discovered in "Vivian Grey," "Three Sundays in a Week" comes from Herschel's "Astronomy," "Hans Pfaall" is a free paraphrase of current scientific works, and Bulwer and Disraeli have been abundantly plundered for the rest!

Other rays of sunshine that fell before he died into his darkened life were the vogue and republication of some of his tales in England — "The Fall of the House of Usher," in "Bentley's," "The Purloined Letter," in Chambers' "Edinburgh Journal," "Mesmeric Revelation" and "The Case of M. Valdemar," in the London "Popular Record of Modern Science," and, of course, the Poems of 1845.

Poe's transatlantic reputation may, indeed, as Professor Trent[1] justly remarks, be regarded as a test of his value as a writer: "It is quite plain that Poe is considered by competent European critics to be the greatest author America has yet produced. His tales at least have been translated into all the chief languages, and have been widely read and more or less imitated. His poems, if less well known, have perhaps been even more influential,— their melody, their weirdness, their ideality having affected in considerable measure most modern lyrical poetry. . . . With the partial exception of Cooper, Poe is practically the only American since Franklin who has been accorded sincere and widespread homage in Europe for intellectual achievements other than scientific — who has, in other words, been recognized as one of the world's master writers. Irving, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and other American authors have indeed been cordially received by British readers; but this is not the same thing as breaking down the barriers of language and winning the applause of the whole civilized world."

It is an astounding circumstance that a mind so apparently wrecked as Poe's was all through the weary months of 1847 — months hyphened together by

[1] "Poe's Rank as a Writer," *East and West*, Aug. 1900.

unalterable gloom from the death of Virginia, in January, to the apparition on the December horizon of the fantastic flame of "Ulalume" — could have recovered vitality or even vivacity enough to meditate upon the deep themes of "Eureka," of the cosmogony of the Universe, of the destiny of the human soul and the fate of the circumambient matter; but so it was.

Poe's argumentative faculty attained perhaps its highest expression in "Eureka": the theme, in itself so abstract, so transcendental, burns and glows with a concrete radiance that *seems* to convince the reader that it is true light and not quagmire phosphorescence; the suppleness of the poet's tongue never abandons him as he climbs the empyrean in his Excelsior flight and forces one stronghold after another of retreating Deity, talking volubly of Newton, Kepler, and La Place the while, until at last "Eureka!" bursts from his lips and he fancies he has found the Eternal.

Having worked the book out through the long and hollow hours of 1847 — hollow from the full life of his sweet Virginia having left him — he was ready with it as a lecture in the early months of 1848. His hope was to rent a hall and secure an audience of three or four hundred persons who would pay him sufficiently to start on a lecturing tour in the interests of "The Stylus" — which now again sweeps up to the surface like the drowned face of Delacroix's maiden. Instead of three or four hundred, sixty persons assembled in the hall of the Society Library, New York, and shivered through three hours of a bleak February night, listening, as one of them reported, to a "rhapsody of the most intense brilliancy. Poe appeared inspired, and his inspiration affected the scant audience almost painfully. His eyes seemed to glow

like those of his own 'Raven.'" His true friend, Willis, so often abused as a mere *dilettante* dandy of literature, helped in this project as in so many others relating to Poe, and did what he could to further it: "My general aim is to start a Magazine [magazines, in that virgin soil and time were burgeoning all over the country] to be called the 'Stylus,'" he wrote; "but it would be useless to me, even when established, if not entirely out of the control of a publisher. With this end in view, I must get a list of, at least, 500 subscribers to begin with: — nearly 200 I have already. I propose, however, to go South and West, among my personal and literary friends — old college and West Point acquaintances — and see what I can do. In order to get the means of taking the first step, I propose to lecture at the [New York Historical] Society Library on Thursday, the 3rd of February — and that there may be no cause of *squabbling* my subject shall *not be literary* at all. I have chosen a broad text — 'The Universe.'"

The Lyceum system of lecturing so entertainingly described by Edward Everett Hale in recent chapters of "James Russell Lowell and his Friends," was just then beginning its popular and fashionable career in New York and New England, and intelligent men and women were flocking to the lecture courses with pencil and note-book, eager to take down the words of inspiration as they dropped from the lips of eloquent speakers. The Lowell foundation was one of the results of the movement which, according to Dr. Hale, was a sort of spill-over, protest or expansion from the Sunday lecture, secular topics, however dramatic or useful, not being allowed (as was right) in the Sunday pulpit.

Not disheartened at his poor success nor at the absurdly caricatured accounts of the lecture in the public prints, Poe went bravely to work and wrote out the theory in book form, offering it, with flashing eyes and exuberant enthusiasm, to Mr. Putnam, the publisher of two of his books. He suggested an edition of 50,000; Mr. Putnam listened attentively, and ventured upon an edition of — 500.

The title, preface, etc., are as follows (we quote from a copy of the original edition) : —

Eureka: | A Prose Poem, | by | Edgar A. Poe. | New York: | Geo. P. Putnam, | of late Firm of "Wiley and Putnam," | 155 Broadway. | MDCCCXLVIII. | With very Profound Respect, | This Work is Dedicated | to | Alexander Von Humboldt.

Preface. — To the few who love me and whom I love — to those who feel rather than to those who think — to the dreamers and those who put faith in dreams as in the only realities — I offer this Book of Truths, not in its character of Truth-Teller, but for the Beauty that abounds in its Truth; constituting it true. To these I present the composition as an Art-Product alone: — let us say as a Romance; or, if I be not urging too lofty a claim, as a Poem.

What I here propound is true: — therefore it cannot die: — or if by any means it be now trodden down so that it die, it will "rise again to the Life Everlasting."

Nevertheless it is as a Poem only that I wish this work to be judged after I am dead. E. A. P.

The book is bound in boards and contains about 136 pages of text, outside of the preface, dedication,

and title-page. What Poe himself considered the gist of "Eureka" may be gathered from the following letter: —

NEW YORK, February 29, 1848.

GEO. E. ISBELL, ESQ.:

DEAR SIR, — A press of business has hitherto prevented me from replying to your letter of the 10th. "The Vestiges of Creation" I have not yet seen; and it is always unsafe and unwise to form opinions of books from reviews of them. The extracts of the work which have fallen in my way abound in inaccuracies of fact; still these may not materially affect the general argument. One thing is certain; that the objections of *merely* scientific men — men, I mean, who cultivate the physical sciences to the exclusion, in a greater or less degree, of the mathematics, of metaphysics and logic — are generally invalid except in respect to scientific *details*. Of all persons in the world, they are at the same time the most bigoted and the least capable of using, generalizing or deciding upon the facts which they bring to light in the course of their experiments. And these are the men who chiefly write the criticisms *against* all efforts at generalization — denouncing these efforts as "speculative" and "theoretical."

The notice of my lecture, which appeared in the "New World," was written by some one grossly incompetent to the task which he undertook. No idea of what I said can be gleaned from either that or any other of the newspaper notices — with the exception, perhaps, of the "Express" — where the critique was written by a gentleman of much scientific acquirement, Mr. E. A. Hopkins, of Vermont. I enclose you his report, which, however, is inaccurate in numerous particulars. He gives my *general* conception so, at least, as not to caricature it.

I have not yet published the lecture, but, when I do so, will have the pleasure of mailing you a copy. In the meantime, permit me to state succinctly my principal *results*.

General Proposition. Because nothing was, therefore all things are.

1. An inspection of the *universality* of gravitation — of the fact that each particle tends not to any one common point, but to every other particle, suggests perfect totality of *absolute unity* as the source of the phenomenon.

2. Gravity is but the mode in which is manifested the tendency of all things to return into their original unity.

3. I show that the law of the return — *i. e.*, the law of gravity — is but a necessary result of the necessary and sole possible mode of equable irradiation of matter through a *limited* space.

4. Were the universe of stars (contradistinguished from the universe of space) unlimited, no worlds could exist.

5. I show that unity is nothingness.

6. All matter, springing from unity sprang from nothingness, *i. e.*, was created.

7. All will return to unity, *i. e.*, to nothingness.

I would be obliged to you if you would let me know how far these ideas are coincident with those of the "Vestiges."

Very resp'y yr. ob. st.,

Edgar A. Poe.

He had opened the discussion with words almost as solemn as the chords which prelude some divine symphony: "Eureka: an Essay on the Material and Spiritual Universe.

"It is with humility really unassumed — it is with a sentiment even of awe — that I pen the opening sentence of this work: for of all conceivable subjects I approach the reader with the most solemn — the most comprehensive — the most difficult — the most august.

"What terms shall I find sufficiently simple in

their sublimity — sufficiently sublime in their simplicity — for the mere enunciation of my theme?

"I design to speak of the *Physical, Metaphysical and Mathematical — of the Material and Spiritual Universe: — of its Essence, its Origin, its Creation, its Present Condition and its Destiny.* I shall be so rash, moreover, as to challenge the conclusions, and thus, in effect, to question the sagacity, of many of the greatest and most justly reverenced of men."

Poe was a great admirer of Humboldt's "Cosmos," and he therefore dedicates to its author his famous tract "De Natura Rerum." Lucretius had written a wonderful poem in Latin hexameters on this topic, astonishing the ancient world by his elevated Epicureanism and passionate enthusiasm for what was true; and there is more than one striking analogy between the Roman and the American. Both, in their poems, were passionate inconoclasts, idealists, dreamers of the speculative philosophies that looked into the causes of things; both set aside what they considered the degrading superstitions, and reinstated Divinity in its rights. What a critic has well called "the impassioned solemnity" of Lucretius, is the religious, the almost reverential, spirit with which Poe approaches the problem of the Universe. Both are refined materialists of an almost spiritual type. Lucretius's object was to clear the mind from the fear of the gods and the terrors of a future state, endeavoring to "show that the world is not governed by capricious agency, but has come into existence, continues in existence, and will ultimately pass away in accordance with the primary conditions of the elemental atoms which, along with empty space, are the only eternal and immutable substances. That atoms are themselves infinite in num-

ber, but limited in their varieties, and by their ceaseless movement and combinations during infinite time and through infinite space the whole process of creation is maintained." Poe's object was not far different from Lucretius's in his abhorrence of superstition; and all that the critic has to say about Lucretius's power of reasoning — the subtlety and fertility of invention with which he applies analogies, the keenness and clearness of his observation, the consecutive force, precision, and distinction of his style as employed in the processes of scientific exposition, are as if written of Poe. The Roman went mad from a love-philtre and committed suicide in his forty-fourth year; the mixed elements of Poe's life — his dangerous deliriums, his passionate loves, hates, and adorations — brought him very near to Lucretius's fate. And both threw their sublime speculations into poem-form, the one into six or seven thousand sonorous Latin lines that roll majestically as ocean-surges on the shore, the other into a brilliant monologue which, but for the ill-judged burlesque element at its beginning, might be an oratorio of the Creation.

CHAPTER XIV.

1848.

MRS. WHITMAN. "THE BELLS;" MRS. OSGOOD.

"HELEN — *my* Helen — the Helen of a thousand dreams!"

Such are the words, in one of Poe's impassioned letters to Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, which from now on form the key-note of his existence, an existence in which the love of woman, the adoration of the Womanly, had always formed an essential part. Starting with his devotion to the gentle Mrs. Allan, and to Mrs. Stanard, continuing with his adoration of his child-wife, and of his "more than mother," concentrating into affectionate admiration for Mrs. Shew and Mrs. Osgood, all the love that was now left in Poe's volcanic nature rose to brief fever-heat in the passion for the beautiful and spiritual New England soul that had

> "Come up through the lair of the Lion,
> With love in her luminous eyes,"

and smiled at him over the "legended tomb" of the lost Ulalume.

Rarely gifted as a poet herself, accomplished in many literatures, imbued with the culture of France and Germany, and tracing descent from an ancient Celtic-

Norman stock to which she believed Poe's lineage also ran up, Sarah Helen Power was born in Providence, Rhode Island, January 19 (Poe's birthday), 1803, and died June 27, 1878.[1] "Marrying John W. Whitman, a lawyer of Boston, in 1828, she was left a widow by his death in 1833. Betrothed to Edgar Poe, in 1848, a few months before his death, the engagement was broken, on the eve of the marriage, by the interference of friends. The early life of the poet was shadowed by the long absence of her father, and her later years were almost wholly devoted to a sister, left her in sacred charge by her mother. The poem 'In Memoriam' is the requiem of this sister. This poem, Mrs. Whitman's last, has all the intellectual vigor of youth, though written at the age of seventy-five. The freshness of her spirit and the charm of her presence were not lost in the vicissitudes of a life of strange and romantic experience. No one ever associated with her the idea of age. She is represented as lying beautiful as a bride in death, her brown hair scarcely touched with gray.

". . . Mrs. Whitman's poems, to an unusual degree, illustrate the author's life. By her direction the poems relating to Edgar Poe . . . have been grouped together, though not placed under a separate head. To this group belong 'Remembered Music,' 'Our Island of Dreams,' 'The Last Flowers,' 'Song,' 'Withered Flowers,' 'The Phantom Voice,' 'Arcturus in October,' 'Resurgemus,' the six 'Sonnets To ——,' 'Arcturus in April,' and 'The Portrait.'

"In 1860 Mrs. Whitman published the little book, 'Edgar Poe and his Critics,' of which Curtis wrote in

[1] We quote by permission the Introduction to "Poems: By Sarah Helen Whitman": Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1879.

'Harper's Weekly': 'In reading the exquisitely tender, subtle, sympathetic, and profoundly appreciative sketch of Edgar Poe, which has just been issued under this title, it is impossible not to remember the brave woman's arm, thrust through the slide to serve as a bolt against the enemy. . . . The author, with an inexpressible grace, reserve, and tender, heroic charity, — having a right which no other person has to speak, — tells in a simple, transparent, and quiet strain, what she thinks of his career and genius.'"

In 1854 a small volume of Mrs. Whitman's poems, entitled "Hours of Life," appeared in Providence, and received a warm welcome from George Ripley, Curtis, and others; and this, in 1879, was followed by her collected Poems in the edition from which we make these extracts.

It is impossible, in looking over these poems, not to be struck by their Poësque diction, music, and idiosyncrasy, as of a kindred soul caught by the spell of an overmastering genius. "The Golden Ball" is musically reminiscent of "The Raven"; "To ——" has grown out of the magic root of "To Helen"; the poems in memory of Poe are impassioned dirges, kindling with cadences of "beauty, majesty, and woe" that sweep from out the chords of the seraph harp of Israfel. Full of delicacy, spontaneity, appreciation of Nature, and mastery over rhythm, these poems present a spirit of rare sweetness and refinement, and it is no wonder that they caught Poe's eye and soul, and drew from him enthusiastic praise in a lecture on "The Female Poets of America." In 1849 Mrs. Whitman addressed to him the following lines:

ARCTURUS.

[WRITTEN IN OCTOBER.]

"Our stars look through the storm."

STAR of resplendent front! thy glorious eye
Shines on me still from out yon clouded sky, —
Shines on me through the horrors of a night
More drear than ever fell o'er day so bright, —
Shines till the envious Serpent slinks away,
And pales and trembles at thy steadfast ray.

Hast thou not stooped from heaven, fair star! to be
So near me in this hour of agony? —
So near, — so bright, — so glorious, that I seem
To lie entranced as in some wondrous dream, —
All earthly joys forgot, — all earthly fear,
Purged in the light of thy resplendent sphere:
Kindling within my soul a pure desire
To blend with thine its incandescent fire, —
To lose my very life in thine, and be
Soul of thy soul through all eternity.

The occasion of Poe's first sight of Mrs. Whitman is romantically described as follows:

"Poe caught a glimpse of a white figure wandering in a moonlit garden in Providence, 'on his way from Boston, when he visited that city to deliver a poem before the Lyceum there. Restless, near midnight, he wandered from his hotel near where she lived, until he saw her walking in a garden. He related the incident afterwards in one of his most exquisite poems, worthy of himself, of her, and of the most exalted passion.'"

These lines begin:

"I saw thee once — once only — years ago:
I must not say how many — but not many.
It was a July midnight; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
There fell a silvery silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
Upon the upturned faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tip-toe.

. . . . . .

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half-reclining; while the moon
Fell on the upturned faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturned — alas, in sorrow!

"Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight —
Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow)
That bade me pause before that garden-gate
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?"

The lady in 1847–48 addressed an anonymous Valentine to the author of "The Raven"; in the summer or early fall of 1848 the two met at her mother's house, Poe carrying a letter of introduction from the authoress, Maria McIntosh. Always looking for the mystic and the improbable, the poet believed, from the agreement of name between this Helen and the one he had so musically worshipped in his far-off boyish days, that there was a pre-ordained connection between their fates. "I yielded at once," he writes, "to an overwhelming sense of Fatality. From that hour

I have never been able to shake from my soul the belief that my Destiny, for good or for evil, either here or hereafter, is in some measure interwoven with your own."

One must turn to the most glowing letters of Abelard and Eloïse, or to the "Sonnets from the Portuguese" for the fire, the urgency, the consuming thirst to be loved that burn and glow in Poe's letters of this period — a period of new-risen Hope, of resurrection from a dead self, of rebirth into an existence that began to shimmer with the new leaves and new light of a dawning spring after the autumnal blasts and blights of the months just gone by. The eager, tremulous, stormy joy of these new weeks and months is prophetic of the new Poe that was about to be born, or that might have been born, had not Disaster intervened here, as at every important crisis-moment of the poet's life, and cried Halt!

One of the most remarkable incidents in this remarkable summer was the suggestion and composition of "The Bells," the second of the great brace of poems that have given Poe world-wide celebrity. The poem was, singularly enough, suggested by a lady who, she confessed, had never read a line of the poet's writings — Mrs. Shew, the guardian angel of Fordham. Busied in philanthropic work, she had never had time to read the poems of Poe. "One day," says Mr. Ingram, "he came in and said: 'Marie Louise, I have to write a poem; I have no feeling, no sentiment, no inspiration.' His hostess persuaded him to have some tea. It was served in the conservatory, the windows of which were open, and admitted the sound of neighboring church bells. Mrs. Shew said, playfully,

'Here is paper,' but the poet, declining it, declared: 'I so dislike the sound of bells to-night, I cannot write. I have no subject — I am exhausted.' The lady then took up the pen, and pretending to mimic his style, wrote 'The Bells, by E. A. Poe'; and then in pure sportiness, 'The bells, the little silver bells,' Poe finishing off the stanza. She then suggested for the next verse 'The heavy iron bells'; and this Poe also expanded into a stanza. He next copied out the complete poem, and headed it 'By Mrs. M. L. Shew,' remarking that it was her poem, as she had suggested and composed so much of it."

Such was the germ of this melodious *onomato-poem*, the most perfect imitation in word, sound, and rhythm, in suggestion, in exquisite mimicry, of its theme ever written, not even excepting the marvellous "Les Djinns" of Victor Hugo or the "Lodore" of Southey. The very spirit — and spirituality — the essence and *aura* of the musical bell-metal, with all its golden and silver and brazen tones, seems to have flowed into the poet's soul as he wrote, and to have taken tongues never before so musically voiced, not even by Schiller.

"The Bells" went through no less than three transformations before it reached the public in its final form, being published in Sartain's "Union Magazine" for November, 1849 (after Poe's death). The editor of the magazine gave the following account of its evolution: "The singular poem of Mr. Poe's, called 'The Bells,' which we published in our last number, has been very extensively copied. There is a curious piece of literary history connected with this poem, which we may as well give now as at any other time. It illustrates the gradual development of

an idea in the mind of a man of original genius. This poem came into our possession about a year since [consequently, about December, 1848]. It then consisted of *eighteen lines!* They were as follows:

THE BELLS. — A SONG.

THE bells! — hear the bells!
The merry wedding-bells!
The little silver bells!
How fairy-like a melody there swells
From the silver tinkling cells
Of the bells, bells, bells!
Of the bells!

The bells! — ah, the bells!
The heavy iron bells!
Hear the tolling of the bells!
Hear the knells!
How horrible a monody there floats
From their throats —
From their deep-toned throats!
How I shudder at the notes
From the melancholy throats
Of the bells, bells, bells!
Of the bells!

"About six months after this we received the poem enlarged and altered nearly to its present size and form; and about three months since, the author sent another alteration and enlargement, in which condition the poem was left at the time of his death."

This was one of the poems which Poe was accused of selling three times — a charge indignantly denied by Mr. Sartain himself.

Poe's excited condition this memorable summer — the summer that Dr. Francis said "he has heart-disease and must die young," as he looked on the sleeping poet — brought his devoted friendship with Mrs. Shew to a sudden close: Mrs. Shew naturally became afraid of her gifted patient, who could sink into a twelve-hours' slumber, and not know that he had slept; who was liable to fits of overwhelming depression; the prey of melancholia, evidently near the last stages of cerebral congestion, and possessed by a world of weird and uncanny thoughts. The rupture was a very natural one from a woman's point of view; and yet the lady herself has been handed down to history as one of the four "holy women" who stood by the tomb and defended the "resurrected" poet with all the eloquence of their pens. When one looks into the life-record of this Pilgrim of Sorrow, it is the faces of Mrs. Shew, Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Whitman, and Mrs. Weiss that peer luminously through the gloom, — their tender and beautiful hands that hold the lamp illuminating it, — their words of cheer, of comfort, of recognition, that sound across the abyss and stay the harsh voice of criticism, — their ministering remembrances that explain much and put much in its true light.

When Horace Greeley heard of Poe's contemplated marriage to Mrs. Whitman, he wrote to Griswold in January, 1849:

"Do you know Sarah Helen Whitman? Of course you have heard it rumored that she is to marry Poe. Well, she has seemed to me a good girl, and — you know what Poe is. Now I know a widow of doubtful age will marry almost any sort of a white man, but this seems to me a terrible conjunction.

Has Mrs. Whitman no friend within your knowledge that can faithfully *explain* Poe to her? I never attempted this sort of thing but once, and the net product was two enemies and a hastening of the marriage; but I do think she must be deceived. Mrs. Osgood must know her."[1]

Poe had once borrowed $50 of Horace Greeley, and had been unable to repay it: the matter is duly — almost gleefully — recorded in Greeley's "Reminiscences."

The story of Poe and Mrs. Whitman — their strange fascination for each other — the magnetism which drew their poetic natures together — the breaches and reconciliations and interviews, and stormy and reproachful letters — is a modern "Leiden des jungen Werthers" that ended, not like the story of Jerusalem in actual, but in attempted, suicide: when Mrs. Whitman's indecision and natural hesitancy to accept his love continued, Poe was driven to laudanum, and tried to end his life. Intimidated by the frightful violence of her lover — hoping perhaps to save him from wilder excesses — and believing in the essential goodness and refinement of his nature — she at length, on receiving solemn pledges from Poe not to yield to temptation, consented to appoint a day for the marriage. The unhappy man, his moral fibre relaxed by disease, the victim of hereditary predispositions, destitute of will and of self-control since the terrible years that preceded Virginia's death, broken in constitution and in health from the awful vigils by her bedside, yielded to some unknown but irresistible pressure of evil, and broke his pledges. The friends of the family — so we are privately as-

[1] Griswold's Correspondence, p. 249.

sured [1] — not Mrs. Whitman herself, broke off the marriage, letters of renunciation passed between the two poets, and they never saw each other again. But what Mrs. Whitman's feelings were, and ever continued to remain, may be gathered from her beautiful lines:

OUR ISLAND OF DREAMS.

"By the foam
Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn." — KEATS.

Tell him I lingered alone on the shore,
Where we parted, in sorrow, to meet nevermore;
The night wind blew cold on my desolate heart
But colder those wild words of doom, "Ye must part!"

O'er the dark, heaving waters, I sent forth a cry;
Save the wail of those waters there came no reply.
I longed, like a bird, o'er the billows to flee,
From our lone island home and the moan of the sea:

Away, — far away — from the wild ocean shore,
Where the waves ever murmur, "No more, never more,"
Where I wake, in the wild noon of midnight, to hear
The lone song of the surges, so mournful and drear.

Where the clouds that now veil from us heaven's fair light,
Their soft, silver lining turn forth on the night;
When time shall the vapors of falsehood dispel,
He shall know if I loved him; but never how well.

[1] In a letter from the late Dr. W. F. Channing, her friend and biographer.

Mrs. Whitman, says Ingram, firmly believed that Poe wrote "Annabel Lee" in response to this poem.

The story of the lovely spiritualist, robed always in white, and of her spirit-like habits of going and coming in Shelleyan wise, is said to have suggested to Charles Dickens a character in one of his famous later novels. One who evidently knew Mrs. Whitman well writes in the New York "Saturday Times," October 25, 1899:

"This tragedy of the heart colored all the rest of Sarah Helen Whitman's life. It could not affect her appreciation of Poe's brilliant powers, nor diminish her love of his finer nature, the gentle, winning side, which revealed the man God meant him to be. But it cast a soft, half-veiling shadow over her. She walked the rest of the way under a kindly cloud that seemed to protect her from the glaring light of day and save her from the scrutiny of prying eyes. She seemed different and apart from other women. There was about her something mysterious and elusive. As she glided softly into the room, she brought with her a dreamy, other-world atmosphere, which subdued noisy laughter or idle talk; and when she spoke, in her low, sweetly modulated voice, others listened. Mrs. Whitman's talk was always worth while; whether of poetry or politics, of every day affairs or spiritual things, it was sure to be interesting. She could be merry, too, and sarcastic if it suited the occasion. She had flitting, spirit-like ways, of coming softly and disappearing suddenly, of half concealing herself behind a curtain and peeping out as she joined in the conversation.

"Strictly unconventional in the matter of clothes, she loved silken draperies, lace scarfs, and veils, and

seemed to be always lightly shod. At one time she wore constantly around her throat a black velvet ribbon, pinned with a tiny coffin which a friend had carved for her in some dark-colored wood, and this funereal badge she seemed to prize above diamonds or pearls. She liked a fan in her hand to screen her eyes from the light, and her own pleasant rooms were never glaring. On one wall hung a portrait of her poet, hidden by a silken curtain. It had his wonderful eyes. This picture was the subject of Mrs. Whitman's poem 'The Portrait.'"

These lines (written in 1870) begin:

"After long years I raised the folds concealing
That face, magnetic as the morning's beam:
While slumbering memory thrilled at its revealing,
Like Memnon wakening from his marble dream.

"Again I saw the brow's translucent pallor,
The dark hair floating o'er it like a plume;
The sweet, imperious mouth, whose haughty valor
Defied all portents of impending doom;"

and they end with the stanza on our title-page.

The "Whitman episode" is closed by the following letter from Mrs. Whitman herself to W. F. Gill, dated August, 1873:[1] "No such scene as that described by Dr. Griswold ever transpired in my presence. No one, certainly no woman, who had the slightest acquaintance with Edgar Poe, could have credited the story for an instant. He was essentially and instinctively a gentleman, utterly incapable, even in moments of excitement and delirium, of such an outrage as Dr. Griswold has ascribed to him. No authentic anecdote of

[1] Life of Poe; Chatto and Windus: London: 1878, p. 227.

coarse indulgence in vulgar orgies or bestial riot has ever been recorded of him. During the last years of his unhappy life, whenever he yielded to the temptation that was drawing him into its fathomless abyss, as with the resistless swirl of the maelström, he always lost himself in sublime rhapsodies on the evolution of the universe, speaking as from some imaginary platform to vast audiences of rapt and attentive listeners. During one of his visits to this city [Providence], in the autumn of 1848, I once saw him after one of those nights of wild excitement, before reason had fully recovered its throne. Yet even then, in those frenzied moments when the doors of the mind's 'Haunted Palace' were left unguarded, his words were the words of a princely intellect overwrought, and of a heart only too sensitive and too finely strung. I repeat that no one acquainted with Edgar Poe could have given Dr. Griswold's scandalous anecdote a moment's credence."

The whole Petronius-like scene was also flatly contradicted by Mrs. Whitman's intimate friend, Wm. J. Pabodie, Esq., of Providence, in the "New York Tribune" for June 2 and 11, 1852, and has now been thrown aside by all right-minded people as utterly discredited.

The union of these two ethereal natures — "the pale, poetic presence" of the one, the Ligeian harmony of the other — promised indeed to be of exquisite fruition, but was destined never to be fulfilled.

The coarse rumors of drunken intoxication, of ribald scenes in Mrs. Whitman's gardens and house, and of police interference, reported by various biographers, have thus been proved to be absolutely false, as they were on the face of them absolutely impossible. This one can see from the testimony of another woman of

genius who was intimate with the Poes, and whose noble affection dictated some of the warmest words in defence of the poet — Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood.

On her death-bed, seven months after Poe's death, she wrote:[1]

"I think no one could know him — no one *has* known him personally — certainly no woman — without feeling the same interest [as I did]. I can sincerely say, that I have frequently *heard* of aberrations on his part from the 'straight and narrow path.' I have never *seen* him otherwise than gentle, generous, well bred, and fastidiously refined. To a sensitive and delicately nurtured woman, there was a peculiar and irresistible charm in the chivalric, graceful, and almost tender reverence with which he invariably approached all women who won his respect. It was this which first commanded and always retained my regard for him.

"*I have been told* that when his sorrows and pecuniary embarrassments had driven him to the use of stimulants, which a less delicate organization might have borne without injury, he was in the habit of speaking disrespectfully of the ladies of his acquaintance. *It is difficult for me to believe this;* for to *me*, to whom he came during the year of our acquaintance for counsel and kindness in all his many anxieties and griefs, he never spoke irreverently of any woman save one, and then only in *my* defence; and though I rebuked him for his momentary forgetfulness of the respect due to himself and to me, I could not but forgive the offence for the sake of the generous impulse which prompted it. Yet, even were these sad rumors true of him, the wise and well-informed knew how to regard, as they would the impetuous anger of a spoiled

[1] Mrs. Osgood to Griswold, from the Griswold Memoirs of Poe.

infant, baulked of its capricious will, the equally harmless and unmeaning phrensy of that stray child of Poetry and Passion. For the few unwomanly and slander-loving gossips who have injured *him* and *themselves* only by repeating his ravings, when in such moods they have accepted his society, I have only to vouchsafe my wonder and my pity. They cannot surely harm the true and pure, who, reverencing his genius and pitying his misfortunes and his errors, endeavored by their timely kindness and sympathy, to soothe his sad career.

"It was in his own simple yet poetical home, that to me the character of Edgar Poe appeared in its most beautiful light. Playful, affectionate, witty, alternately docile and wayward as a petted child — for his young, gentle, and idolized wife, and for all who came, he had, even in the midst of his most harassing duties, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention. At his desk, beneath the romantic picture of his loved and lost Lenore, he would sit, hour after hour, patient, assiduous, and uncomplaining, tracing in an exquisitely clear chirography, and with almost superhuman swiftness, the lightning thoughts — the 'rare and radiant' fancies — as they flashed through his wonderful and ever-wakeful brain."

The woman referred to in Mrs. Osgood's recollections was a certain Mrs. Ellet, who made herself notorious by meddling in Poe's private affairs and following him with relentless persecution when he denounced her. It seems that on a certain occasion she saw a letter of Mrs. Osgood's to Poe lying open on a table, read it, and immediately got up a committee of ladies, with Margaret Fuller at their head, to call on the offending poet at Fordham, and remon-

strate. Poe, who detested both Mrs. Ellet and Margaret Fuller, though in his "Literati" he did full justice to the genius of the latter, denounced the Paul Pry, and angrily said she had better look after her own correspondence. This brought down on the poet a personal difficulty with the woman's family and resulted in a world of slanders, lies, and abuse heaped on his devoted head.

In a letter only lately accessible through the publication of the Griswold Correspondence (p. 256), Mrs. Osgood in a letter referring to these slanders and the whole painful episode of her correspondence with and friendship for Poe, writes to Griswold in 1850:

"I trust you will write that life of Poe [she never saw the Life after it was written!]. I will do as you wished: I will write, as far as is proper, in a letter to you, my reminiscences of that year [apparently 1846–47], and try to make it interesting and dignified, and you in introducing it by one single sentence can put down at once my envious calumniators. You have the proof in Mrs. Poe's letter to me, and in *his* to Mrs. Ellet, either of which would fully establish my innocence in a court of justice — certainly *hers* would. Neither of them, as you know, were persons likely to take much trouble to prove a woman's innocence, and it was only because she felt that I had been cruelly and shamefully wronged by her mother and Mrs. E. that she impulsively rendered me that justice. She, Mrs. Poe, felt grieved that she herself had drawn me into the snare by imploring me to be kind to Edgar — to grant him my society and to write to him, because, she said, I was the only woman he knew who influenced him for his good, or, indeed, who had any lasting influence over him. I wish the simple truth to

be known, — that he sought me, not I him. It is too cruel that I, the only one of those literary women who did not seek his acquaintance, — for Mrs. Ellet asked an introduction to him, and followed him everywhere, Miss Lynch begged me to bring him there and called upon him at his lodgings, Mrs. Whitman besieged him with valentines and letters long before he wrote or took any notice of her, and all the others wrote poetry and letters to him, — it is too cruel that I should be singled out after his death as the only victim to suffer from the slanders of his mother. I never thought of him till he sent me his 'Raven' and asked Willis to introduce him to me, and immediately after I went to Albany, and afterwards to Boston and Providence to avoid him, and he followed me to each of those places and wrote to me, imploring me to love him, many a letter which I did not reply to until his *wife* added her entreaties to his and said that I might save him from infamy, and her from death, by showing an affectionate interest in him."

Stung to the quick by the slanders growing out of her Platonic correspondence with Poe, who never ceased to be devoted to her, Mrs. Osgood penned this self-contradictory communication to Griswold; which did not prevent her from addressing an impassioned dirge to the poet's memory as the last poem in the volume of verse published just before her death in May, 1850:

"The hand that swept the sounding lyre
With more than mortal skill,
The lightning eye, the heart of fire,
The fervent lips are still!
No more, in rapture or in woe,
With melody to thrill,
Ah! Nevermore!"

CHAPTER XV.

1848–1849.

"STELLA." "ANNIE." PHILADELPHIA.

During the Whitman episode and while he was travelling to and fro between New York, Providence, and Lowell, where he lectured in August on "The Poetic Principle," he made some valuable acquaintances — the Richmonds, of Westford — who became attached and life-long friends to himself and Mrs. Clemm. We find him soon after in Richmond, Va., and on intimate terms with the poet John R. Thompson, editor of "The Southern Literary Messenger," for which he was furnishing new instalments of "Marginalia." Thompson became extremely fond of Poe, and wrote, after his death, a lecture on him which, it is greatly to be regretted, has seemingly perished. "When in Richmond," reports Mr. Thompson, "he made the office of the 'Messenger' a place of frequent resort. His conversation was always attractive, and at times very brilliant. Among modern authors his favorite was Tennyson, and he delighted to recite from 'The Princess' the song 'Tears, idle tears' — and a fragment of which,

> "'when unto dying eyes
> The casement slowly grows a glimmering square,'

he pronounced unsurpassed by any image expressed in writing."

For Mr. Thompson, whom he inspired with an affection similar to that with which he inspired all with whom he had personal dealings, he wrote much of his sparkling and vivid "Marginalia," as well as reviews of "Stella" and Mrs. Osgood. To his quality and general worth Mr. Thompson, who saw so much of him in his latter days, bears feeling testimony. In 1853, writing to Mr. James Wood Davidson, Mr. Thompson remarks: "Two years ago, I had a long conversation with Mr. Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning concerning Poe. The two poets, like yourself, had formed an ardent and just admiration of the author of 'The Raven,' and feel a strong desire to see his memory vindicated from moral aspersion."

"Stella" was another link in the golden chain of women who honored and almost worshipped the poet, and who have done more than any other persons to vindicate and cleanse his bedraggled memory. She was the woman to whom Poe, as he parted with her the day he left for the fatal journey to Richmond, entrusted the writing of his life — Miss Robinson, an accomplished lady of Baltimore, who had spent much of her early life in Cuba, where her father was engaged in business. She was a thorough linguist in the ancient and modern languages, and married an attorney in Brooklyn, Mr. S. D. Lewis. She tells of her acquaintance in the following lines: "I saw much of Mr. Poe during the last year of his life. He was one of the most sensitive and refined gentlemen I ever met. My girlish poem, 'Forsaken,' made us acquainted. He had seen it floating the rounds of the press, and wrote to tell me how much he liked it: 'It is inexpressibly beautiful,' he said, 'and I should very much like to know the young author.'"

Poe wrote of her: "Mrs. Lewis is, perhaps, the best educated, if not the most accomplished of American authoresses. . . . She is not only cultivated as respects the usual ornamental acquirements of her sex, but excels as a modern linguist, and very especially as a classical scholar; while her scientific acquisitions are of no common order."

The lady translated charmingly from Vergil, published "Records of the Heart" (Appletons, 1844), "The Child of the Sea," (Putnams, 1848), "The King's Stratagem," "Sappho: A Tragedy" (published in London, 1876, and dedicated to her "devoted friend Adelaide Ristori, the greatest living *tragédienne*"), and many fugitive poems. To her Poe addressed "An Enigma," which appeared in the "Union Magazine" for March, 1848 — easily solved by combining, as in "A Valentine," the first letter in the first line with the second in the second, and so on, until "the dear names that lie concealed within 't" are spelt out; and she was one of the warm friends who assisted Mrs. Shew and the Union Club in raising a purse of $100 for the destitute family after Virginia's death.

Not long before the Virginia trip a cheering beam fell across Poe's path in the friendship of the Richmonds (to which we have already referred) — a family who gave Mrs. Clemm a hospitable home and divided with the Lewises the kind offices of true friendship towards her after Poe's death. This friendship began in the summer of 1848, when he was lecturing in Lowell on "The Female Poets of America," and later, the same year, when he lectured on "The Poetic Principle;" and it was to the "Annie" of this household that he addressed his strange and beautiful death-poem, "For Annie," first mentioned in a

letter to her, dated March 23, 1849, and first published in "The Flag of Our Union" the same year. It begins: —

"Thank Heaven! the crisis,
The danger, is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last,
And the fever called 'Living'
Is conquered at last."

The last two lines have the additional interest that Longfellow suggested them as an epitaph for Poe's grave [1] when the Baltimore monument was erected in 1875.

Of this poem Poe wrote: "I enclose also some other lines 'For Annie,' — and will you let me know in what manner they impress you? I have sent them to the 'Flag of Our Union,' . . . I am sorry to say that the 'Metropolitan' has stopped and 'Landor's Cottage' is returned on my hands unprinted. I think the lines 'For Annie' (those I now send) much the *best* I have ever written; but an author can seldom depend on his own estimate of his own works, so I wish to know what 'Annie' *truly* thinks of them. . . . Do not let the verses go *out of your possession* until you see them in print, — as I have sold them to the publisher of the 'Flag.'"

At Poe's request Willis, his faithful friend, "disentombed" the poem from the newspaper in which it was buried and reprinted it in "The Home Journal."

At this time Poe was suffering from repeated disappointments; the numerous literary engagements which he had formed with "The Columbian Magazine," "The Post," "The Whig Review," and "The

[1] Miss S. S. Rice: Edgar Allan Poe: Memorial Volume: Baltimore: 1877.

Democratic," were broken either by the failure of the periodicals or by their inability to pay; even his stand-bys — "The Southern Literary Messenger," "Graham's," and "Sartain's," began to vacillate in their hospitality and to threaten to drop from under him. Articles were returned, were held up indefinitely after acceptance, or disappeared in the mails. He pours out his lamentations to his new Massachusetts friends and reveals to "Annie," with a singular warmth of tone, all his personal feelings, hopes, and forebodings. All this fateful year was full of extraordinary portent for him:

"No, my sadness is *unaccountable*," he writes to her, "and this makes me the more sad. I am full of dark forebodings. *Nothing* cheers or comforts me. My life seems wasted — the future looks a dreary blank: but I will struggle on and 'hope against hope.'"

This was a little while before he set out for Richmond on the final journey.

A lady correspondent of Mr. Gill's [1] has given some graphic recollections of Poe at this time as he appeared to his Lowell-Westford friends:

"I have in my mind's-eye a figure somewhat below medium height, perhaps, but so perfectly proportioned, and crowned with such a noble head, so regally carried, that to my girlish apprehension he gave the impression of commanding stature. Those clear, sad eyes seemed to look from an eminence rather than from the ordinary level of humanity, while his conversational tone was so low and deep that one could easily fancy it borne to the ear from some distant height.

[1] Life of Poe: Chatto and Windus: 1878, p. 209

"I saw him first in Lowell, and there heard him give a lecture on Poetry, illustrated by readings. His manner of rendering some of the selections constitutes my only remembrance of the evening which so fascinated me. Everything was rendered with pure intonation, and perfect enunciation, marked attention being paid to the rhythm. He almost *sang* the more musical versifications. I recall more perfectly than anything else the undulations of his smooth baritone voice as he recited the opening lines of Byron's 'Bride of Abydos': —

"'Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,' —

measuring the dactylic movement perfectly as if he were scanning it. The effect was very pleasing.

"He insisted strongly upon an even, metrical flow in versification, and said that hard, unequally stepping poetry had better be done into prose. I think he made no selections of a humorous character, either in his public or parlor readings. He smiled but seldom, and never laughed, or said anything to excite mirth in others. His manner was quiet and grave. . . . In thinking of Mr. Poe in later years I have often applied to him the line of Wordsworth's sonnet, —

"'Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.'"

The first mention of the ballad of "Annabel Lee" (published two days after his death in the "New York Tribune" for October 9th, then in "The Southern Literary Messenger" for November, 1849, then in Sartain's "Union Magazine" for January, 1850) — literally a voice from the tomb, with the accents of Death and of undying music in it — is found in one

of the letters to "Annie," in which, speaking of the lines "For Annie," he says: "The 'Flag,' so misprinted them that I was resolved to have a true copy. The 'Flag' has two of my articles yet — 'A Sonnet to my Mother,' and 'Landor's Cottage.' . . . I have written a ballad called 'Annabel Lee,' which I will send you soon."

In her "Stanzas for Music," subsequently enlarged and published as "Our Island of Dreams," quoted on p. 291, Mrs. Whitman [1] saw the germ of "Annabel Lee," which she firmly believed was an answer to her poem from the striking allusions to "the night wind blew cold on my desolate heart" and "our lone island home and the moan of the sea," occurring therein. Richard Hengist Horne saw in it one more instance of Poe's "studied artifice, selection, or coinage, of liquid and sonorous sounds and words such as (to spell them phonetically) *ullaleume — annabellee — ells* —(in the 'Bells'), *ore* in 'The Raven,' which abounds in that long-drawn tone."

The last pathetic glimpse that we get of Poe in New York is on an early summer morning in June, when, having spent the night with his "dear Muddie" (as he affectionately called Mrs. Clemm) at Mrs. Lewis's, he stood on the threshold of the hospitable home and, with streaming eyes and heart full of foreboding, bade farewell: a slight, poetic figure, tense with emotion, so full of dynamic force that even then, after many almost deadly illnesses, his brain teemed with projects for the future. All through these latter years one hears of "A Critical History of American Literature," "The Literati: Some Hon-

[1] Ingram, II., 200.

est Opinions about Autorial Merits and Demerits, with Occasional Words of Personality, together with Marginalia, Suggestions, and Essays": an expanded reprint of his Literati series, with quotations from Bacon and Coke; and "Phases of American Literature"; but nothing came of them.

"The day before he left New York for Richmond," says Mrs. Lewis, "Mr. Poe came to dinner and stayed the night. He seemed very sad and retired early. On leaving the next morning he took my hand in his, and, looking in my face, said, 'Dear Stella, my much-beloved friend: You truly understand and appreciate me — I have a presentiment that I shall never see you again. I must leave to-day for Richmond. If I never return, write my life, you can and will do me justice.'

"'I will!' I exclaimed. And we parted to meet no more in this life. *That* promise I have not yet felt equal to fulfil."

Mrs. Clemm noted the wretched spirits in which he parted from them, before leaving home, arranging all his papers and telling her what to do in case he died. The parting on the steamboat was a very dejected one, though he tried in vain to cheer and comfort her with promises to return soon full of love and consolation.

John Sartain, the artist and magazinist, who edited the well-known periodical — Sartain's "Union Magazine" — in which "The Bells" was published, lifts the veil and tells us what happened in Philadelphia to the ill-controlled and impoverished poet: another scene from Dante's Inferno. Poe's low nervous condition, his run-down physical system, his extreme mental depression on separating from his friends, the slow ravages of the lesion in the brain from which he was all this

time suffering, an apparent utter prostration of the will before drugs or stimulants that would for a moment lift him out of the Slough of Despond or even momentarily restore an artificial vigor, were the subtle agencies at work to overthrow his brave determination to show Mrs. Clemm "how good he could be while he was away."

"Poe," says Mr. Gill,[1] "was an inmate [at Philadelphia] of the hospitable mansion of the artist and publisher, Mr. J. Sartain, widely known as the proprietor of 'Sartain's Magazine,' whose kindness the poet had frequently shared. Fortunate, indeed, would it have been for Poe had he met with this staunch friend on first reaching the city this time. Had he fallen into his protecting hands earlier, instead of meeting with reckless associates, ready as in old times to tempt him to the indulgence inevitably fatal to him, how different might have been his fate! But it was ordained otherwise. When he finally reached the residence of his kind friend, Poe was in a highly excited condition, almost distracted indeed. His mind seemed bewildered and oppressed with the dread of some fearful conspiracy against his life; nor could the arguments or entreaties of his friend convince him that some deadly foe was not, at that very moment, in pursuit of him. He begged for a razor for the purpose of removing the moustache from his lip, in order, as he suggested, that he might disguise his appearance, and thus baffle his pursuers. But, unwilling to place such an instrument in his hands, he was prevailed upon to allow his host to effect the desired change upon which he imagined his safety depended. The condition of

[1] Life of Poe: Chatto and Windus: London: 1878, p. 234.

Poe's mind was such that Mr. Sartain, after persuading him to lie down, remained watching with him through the night with anxious solicitude, unwilling to lose sight of the unfortunate sufferer for a moment. The following night, Poe insisted on going out. He turned his steps towards the River Schuylkill, accompanied, however, by his devoted friend, whose apprehension was strengthened by the vehemence with which, without cessation, he poured forth in the rich, musical tones for which he was distinguished, the fervid imageries of his brilliant but over-excited imagination. The all-absorbing theme which still retained possession of his mind, was the fearful conspiracy that threatened his destruction. Vainly his friend endeavored to reassure and persuade him. He rushed on with unwearied steps, threading different streets, his companion striving to lead him homeward, but still in vain.

"Towards midnight, they reached Fairmount and ascended the steps leading to the summit, Poe all the while giving free scope to the conversational powers for which he was always remarkable, insisting upon the imminence of his peril, and pleading with touching eloquence for protection. . . .

"He did n't recover from this intense excitement until, subsequently, escaping from the house, he wandered out into the neighborhood of the city, and, throwing himself down in the open air in a pleasant field, his shattered nerves found a comfortless but sorely needed repose. He woke refreshed. . . .

"All that he could call to mind were the entreaties and persuasions of some 'guardian angel' who had sought to dissuade him from a frightful purpose."

More than three weeks elapsed before Mrs. Clemm,

distracted with apprehension and grief, heard from "Eddie," and then he had reached Richmond and was at the house of Mrs. Nye, an old friend of the family. The man who could trace Conscience with such terrible force in others, through all the minute convolutions of the diseased brain; the man who could figure it in "William Wilson," a frenzied Kriemhild as she pursues Hagen through the blood-stained stanzas of the "Nibelungen Lay"; the man who incarnated it, with its sister Remorse, in the flashing eyes and shadowy form of the "Raven": this man had left his devoted "mother" without a line for three interminable weeks, and now turned up in the home of his youth, an honored and fêted guest!

This episode alone shows that Poe had become a wreck and should have been in some beneficent sanitarium where good food, perfect quiet, the laws of spiritual and physical hygiene, and absolute freedom from excitements might have restored his broken sense of responsibility.

CHAPTER XVI.

1849.

LAST DAYS IN RICHMOND.

THE last days in Richmond have fortunately been painted for us by a sympathetic and artistic hand in a picture to which we can add a few important unprinted details gathered from still living contemporaries of the poet.

In his return — a prodigal — to the beautiful old city of his youth where so many innocent and happy hours had been spent, fishing, hunting, swimming in the ancient yellow "Jeems," running the flower-bespangled woods, acting in the Thespian Club, verse-capping at old Burke's Academy, the city where his mother lay in a nameless and unknown grave, Poe found for a brief two months and a half a renewal of the eagle-like strength of his earlier years. The city had of course grown immensely since his youth; the Mexican War, with its wave of excitement, had passed over the land and brought the great Virginians, Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott prominently before the public; the streets swarmed with new faces; new literary figures had appeared on the scene; but it was, fundamentally, the same dear old Richmond, social, hospitable, sunshiny, richly read in eighteenth century literature, a trifle pedantic in its culture, but full of winsome women and cultivated men who had watched the career of this extraordinary "cosmopolite" (as the

novelist Virginian Cooke, called him) and were ready to welcome the wanderer back to what many of them thought was his native town.

The Mackenzies and Cabells, the Mayos and Sullys, the Sheltons and Carters and Thomases were still there, friends of his youth, ready to kill the fatted calf in honor of the return, and their houses were thrown wide open to the gifted and distinguished stranger. Poe, like Chaucer in his famous "I am a Sotherne man," continually referred to Virginia as his home and shrank from the hyperborean clime and criticism of certain latitudes in the north-east, albeit deriving from thence many an auroral beam of true and lasting friendship. In his own Virginia — consecrated, to him, by the tenderest of names — he felt perfectly at home; and here he felt, too, that his "Stylus" project might grow into a real thing. Friends flocked around him; offers of subscriptions and of subscribers were freely made; and he delivered several lectures in the parlors of the old Exchange Hotel, where, a little later, the Prince of Wales (now King Edward VII.) was entertained in 1860.

Poe put up at the old "Swan Tavern," which is referred to, among other interesting matters, in the following letter to the author:

RICHMOND, Nov. 26th, 1900.

DEAR SIR, — Your letter of November twenty-fifth received, in which you state I might know something of the poet, Edgar Poe, and his visit to Richmond in eighteen forty-nine. My impression is he was a resident at that time of this city, and boarded at the old "Swan Tavern," on Broad Street, between Eighth and Ninth. Dr. George Rawlins, an intimate friend of mine, told me he attended him there in an attack of "delirium tremens,"

and before he had ceased to visit him, he left the tavern, and when next heard from, was in Baltimore, where he renewed his frolic, and died in a few days.

I had no personal acquaintance with Poe, but have often seen him. The only time I ever heard him speak was the summer of eighteen forty-eight in the Exchange Concert-room in this city. The inspiration of the lecture was no doubt need of money. In elucidating his subject — "The Poetic Principle" — he recited excerpts from some of his poems — "Annabelle Lee," "Tintinnabulations of the Bells," etc.; and in conclusion repeated "The Raven" with all the rhythm and pathos of which he was capable. All this before an audience of about twenty persons. The occasion to this day I recall with pleasure. I have heard that at times his necessities were so urgent he would write a poem and sell it to an acquaintance for the paltry sum of one dollar. He was said to be moody and peevish, but always recognized by his school-fellows as a boy of true courage. On one occasion a friend found him lying on the wayside — intoxicated. As he approached him he exclaimed: "Why, Edgar Poe!" when Poe looked at him and replied: "No; poor Edgar," showing he always retained his wits. The "Swan Tavern" is still in existence, but hardly recognizable, having been converted into offices, lodging-rooms, and so on. Miss Jane McKenzie, who adopted Miss Rosalie Poe about the time Mr. Allan took Edgar Poe, is, of course, long since dead — in fact every member of her family, so far as I know, is dead. I had a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Shelton, to whom he was said to be engaged, but of her family I can tell you nothing.

It may be emphasized, in connection with one matter referred to in this letter, that Richmond has for fifty years past been divided into two antagonistic camps on the "Poe question," the minority holding the "delirium tremens" theory of his irregularities, the ma-

jority taking the more humane and charitable view of Mrs. Susan Archer Weiss, in her "Last Days of Edgar A. Poe."[1] The occurrences undoubtedly *occurred* — to use an expressive tautology; but the explanation of them is a purely pathological one: morbid conditions existed which overpowered any will-power that may have been left, honeycombed as this power had become by a string and concatenation of disasters unparalleled in the history of any literary man on record. Schiller, in the "Wallenstein," mercifully keeps the murder of the hero out of sight; Poe is presented to us by his biographers undergoing all the torments of the damned before the gaping eyes of the audience.

This little visit shed an Indian summer glow over the life of the poet that lingers still in the memory of some who saw him. He hunted up his old haunts, made new friends, recited his "Raven" and other poems in the parlors of his intimates, stayed at Duncan's Lodge with the Mackenzies, met his eccentric sister, Rosalie Poe, once more, and above all renewed the acquaintance with the old flame of his University and Academy days, Miss Royster (now Mrs. Shelton, widow of a prosperous merchant — a lady whom the author, living in the same town with her in 1871–76, used to hear familiarly called "Poe's Lenore"). Poe had come down from New York to Richmond in 1848 and had then, it is said, renewed the suit begun more than twenty years before, a period during which both had become widowed. Mrs. Weiss asserts that the engagement was renewed, but that it was broken off when Mrs. Shelton learned that it was purely mercenary — that it was the "Stylus," not herself, that

[1] *Scribner's Monthly*, March, 1878.

Poe was in pursuit of. That Poe's affections for women were intense but fleeting, is a part of the universal record of him; and in the case of Mrs. Shelton it may well have been a momentary recrudescence of the old feeling mixed with new elements of self-interest. The lady herself believed she was engaged to Poe, and so asserted by pen and mouth to Dr. J. J. Moran, the physician who attended Poe in his last illness.[1] In the Ingram correspondence ("Appleton's Journal," May, 1878) she thus describes their meeting in the summer of 1849, describing their relation, however, as a "partial understanding" only:

"I was ready to go to church, when a servant entered and told me that a gentleman in the parlor wished to see me. I went down and was amazed at seeing him [Poe], but knew him instantly. He came up to me in the most enthusiastic manner, and said: 'Oh! *Elmira*, is it you?' I told him I was going to church, that I never let anything interfere with that, and that he must call again. . . .

"When he did call again, he renewed his addresses. I laughed; he looked away serious, and said he was in earnest, and had been thinking about it for a long time. When I found out that he was very serious, I became serious also, and told him that, if he would not take a positive denial, he must give me time to consider. He answered, 'A love that hesitated was not a love for him.' . . . But he stayed a long time, and was very pleasant and cheerful. He came to visit me frequently. . . . I went with him to the 'Exchange Concert-Room,' and heard him read. . . . When he was going away, he begged me to marry him, and prom-

[1] A Defence of Edgar Allan Poe. By Jno. J. Moran, M.D.: Washington, 1885.

ised he would be everything I could desire. He said, when he left, that he was going to New York to wind up some business matters, and that he would return to Richmond as soon as he had accomplished it, although he said, at the same time, that he had a presentiment that he should never see me any more. . . . I was not engaged to him, but there was a partial understanding. . . . He was a gentleman in every sense of the word. He was one of the most fascinating and refined men I ever knew. I never saw him under the influence of wine."

Thus bathing in the sunlight of his youth, touching the hand of people he had not met for twenty years, lounging in the comfortable office of the "Messenger," whose accomplished young editor, the poet John R. Thompson, eagerly received anything he might send, and freshening up old associations at "The Hermitage," the home of the Mayos, fondly intertwined with his earliest memories, Poe seemed well on the way to the happy rejuvenation that awaited a man emerging as from a hideous dream — a life of penury, persecution, and humiliation — into the daylight of restored peace and happiness.

"Poe's personality is as vivid to me," writes Prof. B. C. Gildersleeve to the editor, "as if I had heard and seen him yesterday. I am old enough to remember what an excitement his 'Gold-Bug' created in Charleston when it first appeared, and how severely we boys criticised the inaccuracies in the description of Sullivan's Island. Poe himself I saw and heard in Richmond during the last summer of his life. He was lodging at some poor place in Broad Street, if I am not mistaken. At least I saw him repeatedly in that thoroughfare — a poetical figure, if there ever was

one, clad in black as was the fashion then — slender — erect — the subtle lines of his face fixed in meditation. I thought him wonderfully handsome, the mouth being the only weak point. I was too shy to seek an introduction to the poet, but John R. Thompson procured for me Poe's autograph, a possession of which I was naturally very proud.

"While Poe was in Richmond some of his friends got up a reading for his benefit, and I heard him read 'The Raven' and some other poems before a small audience in one of the parlors of the Exchange Hotel. In spite of my admiration of Poe I was not an uncritical listener, and I have retained the impression that he did not read very well. His voice was pleasant enough, but he emphasized the rhythm unduly — a failing common, I believe, to poets endowed with a keen sense of the music of their own verse."

"A compact, well-set man," wrote Bishop Fitzgerald, "about five feet six inches high, straight as an arrow, easy-gaited, with white linen coat and trousers, black velvet vest and broad Panama hat, features sad yet finely cut, shapely head, and eyes that were strangely magnetic as you looked into them — this is the image of Edgar Allan Poe most vivid to my mind as I saw him one warm day in Richmond in 1849. There was a fascination about him that everybody felt. Meeting him in the midst of thousands a stranger would stop to get a second look, and to ask, 'Who is he?' He was *distingué* in a peculiar sense — a man bearing the stamp of genius and the charm of a melancholy that drew one toward him with a strange sympathy. He was scarcely less unique in his personality than in his literary quality. His writings had already given him national reputation. The gentleness of his manner and

the tones of his voice seemed to me to be strangely contrasted with the bitterness that characterized his personal controversies. These controversies were strangely numerous, and in nearly all cases their intensity was in the inverse ratio to the importance of the issues involved. Poe, I suspect, was one of the men who said worse things than he felt, his talent for satire proving a snare to him, as it has been to many others who with pen or tongue sacrifice moderation for brilliancy or piquancy of expression. He was harshly treated by some of his contemporaries, but he owed them nothing on this account, giving them as good as they sent in the way of invective or sarcasm. The bitter personalities of literary men at that time were owing in part to an evil fashion then prevalent. The duelling and street fights among politicians had their counterpart in the shedding of vitriolic ink among the *literati*, great and small. Poe only differed from the rest in that he had a sharper thrust and a surer aim.

"'The Richmond 'Examiner' was just then achieving its first and winning distinction as an able and ultra advocate of State Rights politics. John C. Calhoun was the leader, and the young 'chivalry' of the South made a following that was heroic, and that did not stop to count the cost. The 'Examiner' was their organ in Virginia — and a live organ it was. John M. Daniel, its editor-in-chief, wrote political leaders that were logic and rhetoric on fire. Robert W. Hughes discussed in good English economic questions from the standpoint of his time and his section. Arthur E. Petticolas wrote concerning art with much enthusiasm and some show of culture. Patrick Henry Aylett, a kinsman of the great orator of the Revolution, whose Christian name he bore, with a free hand

touched up current politics and living politicians. Aylett was a picturesque Virginian of that time — a man nearly seven feet high, who had something of the eloquence of his renowned ancestor, and the easy swing of a man of the people, a man who believed with all his heart in the Revolution of '98 and '99, and uniformly voted the straight Democratic ticket. Mr. Poe now and then contributed a literary article critical and peculiar, unmistakably his own. There were others who wrote for the 'Examiner' — among them a youth who felt called upon to expound oracularly certain controverted Constitutional questions that Clay, Calhoun and Webster had failed to settle. He was a young man then, and need not be named now.

"Poe and Daniel were often together, and I was not surprised when informed that arrangements had been made by which the former was soon to become the literary editor of the 'Examiner,' was talked of in newspaper circles, and much satisfaction expressed by the initiated, who regarded it as a transaction promising good things for Southern journalism and literature. The 'Examiner,' the new star in the journalistic firmament, was expected to blaze with added lustre and fill all the South with the illumination.

"Poe had the sensitive organization of a man of genius, to whom alcoholic stimulation brings madness; for such there is no middle ground between total abstinence and inebriety. By the persuasion of friends he was induced to take a pledge of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. There is no reason to doubt his sincerity. His sad face took on a more hopeful expression; with a new hope in his heart he was about to make a new start in life. It was an-

nounced that he would soon make a visit to New York to close out his affairs there, preparatory to his entrance upon his new engagement at Richmond. With a view to giving him pecuniary assistance in a delicate way, and an expression of the good will of the Richmond public toward him, Poe was invited to deliver a lecture on some topic to be chosen by himself. The tickets were placed at five dollars each, and at that price three hundred persons were packed into the assembly rooms of the old Exchange Hotel. The lecture prepared for that occasion was on 'The Poetic Principle,' and it was read by him as it is now presented in his works. He was a charming reader, his manner the opposite of the elocutionary or sensational — quiet, without gesture, with distinctness of utterance, nice shadings of accent, easy gracefulness, and that indefinable element that draws the hearer toward the speaker with increasing good will and pleasure. I am glad that I heard Poe read that lecture; its sentences on the printed page have for me an added charm from the recollection. The net proceeds of the lecture amounted to fifteen hundred dollars. There was a touch of old Virginia in the way this was done. There is some of that old Virginia still left. The Virginia of that day and this will demonstrate their identity in the outcome of the movement to provide here at your university a suitable memorial of her most distinguished alumnus.

"With the proceeds of this lecture in hand, Mr. Poe started to New York, but he never made the journey. Stopping in Baltimore *en route* he was invited to a birthday party. During the feast the fair hostess asked him to pledge with wine; and he could not refuse. That glass of wine was a spark to a powder magazine. He went on a debauch, and a few days later died in a

hospital of *mania a potu*. On its nearer side death is a tragedy whenever, wherever, and however it may come. But the tragedy of Poe's death is too deep for words of mine. He was only thirty-nine years old. His best work ought to have been before him. Had he lived and worked with unclouded brain and ardent purpose during the tremendous decades that followed, what might he not have achieved! Who can compute the loss to our literature from his untimely death!

"Go on with your work, gentlemen of the University of Virginia, provide a fitting memorial to Edgar Allan Poe, your illustrious son. Young gentlemen of the University, do your part in this good work — and shun the rock on which he was wrecked."[1]

Associated with these striking new particulars connected with Poe's last sojourn in the home of his youth, may well be added the following statement from the gentleman (now living) who administered the temperance oath to Poe while he was there.

617 E. Leigh St., Richmond, Va.,
Dec. 4, 1900.

Prof. J. A. Harrison, University of Va.:

Dear Sir, — Your favor of the 26th ult. I have. I regret to say that I fear I can contribute very little that will help you in your grand undertaking, that of placing fairly before the people the bright side of the character of the poet Poe. About fifty years ago I heard Mr. Poe deliver a lecture at the Exchange Hotel lecture-room this city. I did not meet him again until early in the sum-

[1] Zolnay's bust of Poe was unveiled with brilliant ceremonies in the Public Hall of the University, October 7, 1899. Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie, the guest of the Poe Association, delivered a masterly address on "Poe's Place in American Literature."

mer of 1849. He made his home at the old Swan Tavern (now standing on Broad Street between Eighth and Ninth north side). There he made the acquaintance of some member or members of the Division of the Sons of Temperance (this was a large organization previous to the war of '61–'65); he was proposed for membership, elected, and initiated about the 1st of July, 1849. The position I held in the Division made it my duty to administer to the candidate the obligation of total abstinence. During his stay in the city of the next three months or more there was not the least intimation that he had failed to live up to his obligation. In October he started to Baltimore (as was reported and generally believed to make preparation for his marriage to Mrs. Shelton, who as Miss Royster was a sweetheart of earlier life). A few days later we heard of his death at a hospital in *that city*, and the statement was made and too busily circulated that his death was the result of a spree commenced as soon as he reached Baltimore. We of the temperance order to which he belonged exerted ourselves to get at the facts, and the consensus of opinion was that he had not been drinking, but had been drugged. A gentleman by the name of Benson, born in Baltimore in 1811, and living there until he was twenty-one years old, went to Baltimore, and, as he knew Poe and felt much interest in the manner of his death, went to the hospital at which he died, and had a talk with the doctor (an acquaintance), who told him that Poe had not been drinking when brought to the hospital, but was under the influence of a drug; he added that he suggested the use of stimulants, but that Mr. Poe positively declined taking any. Mr. Poe lived very quietly while here. Some stories were told like the following, showing eccentricity: "He left with a Broad Street shoe merchant (who was also a member of the above mentioned order, and of the same division of which our friend had become a member) a pair of boots for repairs. Our shoe merchant was surprised a few mornings later at being knocked up by the

poet about two hours before daylight, who had called for the boots. He explained that as he was out walking he thought to get the boots then would save him another trip."

I have stated only such facts in regard to Mr. Poe's last visit as I was in some manner mixed up with, and only wish they were of such a character as to be useful to you.

Very Respectfully Yours,

W. J. GLENN.

Bishop Fitzgerald mentions two important circumstances not hitherto known of Poe: that he was to be literary editor of "The Examiner" and had already contributed critical articles to it, and that *he left Richmond with* $1,500 *in his pocket*. The possession of this money throws significant light on the theory that he was drugged.

"The evening of the day," reports Mrs. Weiss, "previous to that appointed for his departure from Richmond, Poe spent at my mother's. He declined to enter the parlors, where a number of visitors were assembled, saying he preferred the more quiet sitting-room; and here I had a long and almost uninterrupted conversation with him. He spoke of his future, seeming to anticipate it with an eager delight, like that of youth. He declared that the last few weeks in the society of his old and new friends had been the happiest that he had known for many years, and that when he again left New York, he should there leave behind all the trouble and vexation of his past life. On no occasion had I seen him so cheerful and hopeful as on this evening. 'Do you know,' he inquired, 'how I spent most of this morning? In writing a critique of your poems to be accompanied by a bio-

graphical sketch. I intend it to be one of my best, and that it shall appear in the second number of "The Stylus" ' — so confident was he in regard to this magazine. In the course of the evening he showed me a letter just received from 'his friend, Dr. Griswold,' in reply to one but recently written by Poe, wherein the latter had requested Dr. Griswold in case of his sudden death to become his literary executor. In this reply, Dr. Griswold accepted the proposal, expressing himself as much flattered thereby, and writing in terms of friendly warmth and interest. It will be observed that this statement is a contradiction of his statement that previous to Poe's death he had had no intimation of the latter's intention of appointing him his literary executor.

"In speaking of his own writings, Poe expressed his conviction that he had written his best poems, but that in prose he might yet surpass what he had already accomplished. He admitted that much which he had said in praise of certain writers was not the genuine expression of his opinions. . . . 'You must not judge of me by what you find me saying in the magazines. Such expressions of opinion are necessarily modified by a thousand circumstances, the wishes of editors, personal friendship, etc.'

"Poe expressed great regret in being compelled to leave Richmond, on even so brief an absence. He would certainly, he said, be back in two weeks. He thanked my mother with graceful courtesy and warmth for her kindness and hospitality, and begged that we would write to him in New York, saying it would do him good.

"He was the last of the party to leave the house. We were standing on the portico, and after going a

few steps he paused, turned, and again lifted his hat, in a last adieu. At the moment, a brilliant meteor appeared in the sky directly over his head, and vanished in the east. We commented laughingly upon the incident; but I remembered it sadly afterwards."

The prophetic words of "Ulalume" immediately recur:

> "The skies they were ashen and sober;
> The leaves they were crispèd and sere,
> The leaves they were withering and sere;
> It was night in the lonesome October
> Of my most immemorial year."

October somehow seems mystically entangled with the poet's fate, just as the great dirge of "The Raven," which Doré has transformed into a magic and ardent Passion Play of Shadow-Land, swarming with the mystic imagery of Dreams, seemingly points in its "bleak December," to the month in which the poet's mother died in Richmond.

"As he was about to leave Richmond, he turned to Mr. Thompson, saying, 'By the way, you have been very kind to me, — here is a little trifle that may be worth something to you'; and he handed Mr. Thompson a small roll of paper, upon which were written the exquisite words of 'Annabel Lee.'"[1]

Just a little while before, on St. Valentine's Day, 1849, he wrote to his friend Thomas: "Right glad am I to find you once more in a true position — in the field of Letters. Depend upon it, after all, Thomas, Literature is the most noble of professions. In fact, it is about the only one fit for a man. For my part, there is no seducing me from the path. I

[1] Gill's Life of Poe: Chatto and Windus: 1878: p. 231.

shall be a *Littérateur* at least all my life; nor would I abandon the hopes which still lead me on for all the gold in California [the Argonaut "craze" was just then starting and the whole country was aflame with fabulous reports from the western Golconda]. Talking of gold, and of the temptations at present held out to 'poor-devil authors,' did it ever strike you that all which is really valuable to a man of letters — to a poet in especial — is absolutely unpurchasable? Love, fame, the dominion of intellect, the consciousness of power, the thrilling sense of beauty, the free air of Heaven, exercise of body and mind, with the physical and moral health which result — these and such as these are really all that a poet cares for: then answer me this — *why* should he go to California?"

Life seemed bewilderingly bright — almost as bright as the fairy landscapes of "Arnheim" and "The Island of the Fay" painted it — now that he had arranged with a Mr. E. H. W. Patterson, of Oquawka, Illinois, for the simultaneous publication, in St. Louis and New York, of "The Stylus," to appear in July, 1850. Meanwhile, there were dark sides to the picture: Mrs. Clemm was actually suffering, as she wrote Griswold, for the necessaries of life, and begged a small loan from the supposed friend; neither "Annie" nor "Estelle" had yet come to the rescue as they so nobly did, later.

But the wedding-ring was ready, and the scene so exquisitely pre-figured in "The Bridal Ballad" — with the situation of bride and groom reversed — was about to take place: only a dress-coat was still wanting, to make Richmond, the scene of the first marriage, the scene of a second and happier one. Much, and eloquently, as Poe had written against second marriages

— in "Ligeia" for instance, and "The Bridal Ballad" — he was about to embark on one himself, the same match from which, a year before, he had been mysteriously recalled by the reception of two anonymous stanzas from Mrs. Whitman when he was in Richmond on the same mission. Apparently, he did not remember his own prophetic and incisive words:

> "Would God I could awaken!
> For I dream I know not how,
> And my soul is sorely shaken
> Lest an evil step be taken,
> Lest the dead who is forsaken
> May not be happy now."

"The [last] night," continues Mrs. Weiss, "he spent at Duncan's Lodge [the home of the Mackenzies, who had adopted his sister]; and as his friends said, sat late at his window, meditatively smoking, and seemingly disinclined for conversation. On the following morning, he went into the city, accompanied by his friends, Dr. Gibbon Carter and Dr. Mackenzie. The day was passed with them and others of his intimate friends. Late in the evening he entered the office of Dr. John Carter, and spent an hour in looking over the day's papers; then taking Dr. Carter's cane he went out, remarking that he would step across to Saddler's (a fashionable restaurant) and get supper. From the circumstance of his taking the cane, leaving his own in its place, it is probable he had intended to return; but at the restaurant he met with some acquaintances who detained him until late, and then accompanied him to the Baltimore boat. According to their accounts, he was quite sober and cheerful to the last, remarking, as he took leave of them, that he would soon be in Richmond again."

CHAPTER XVII.

1849.

IN BALTIMORE: THE END.

ACCORDING to even modern standards, Poe could not have reached Baltimore by the James River and Chesapeake Bay—Patapsco route—under from twenty-four to twenty-eight hours; then, when steam navigation was so much slower and more imperfect, it must have required much longer. At present a steamer leaves Richmond at 6 or 7 A. M. and reaches Old Point at 5 or 6 P. M.; the fast Bay steamers then reach Washington about five or six in the morning, the Baltimore route being even longer.

Possibly he met on this rather prolonged and tedious water-trip persons who induced him to break his pledge: one does not know.

The following note from Dr. William Hand Browne to the author is self-explanatory and also explanatory of the last act in the tragedy:

"The following is an exact copy of the pencil note sent to Dr. Snodgrass to notify him of the condition in which Poe was. The writer, J. W. Walker, was (I have been informed) a printer of Baltimore. The note was copied by myself from the original in the possession of Mrs. Snodgrass, widow of Poe's friend. Dr. Snodgrass, on receipt of the note, hastened to

attend Poe, and finding him in a dangerous state, had him removed to the hospital, where he died. W. H. B."

BALTIMORE CITY, 3d, 1849.

DEAR SIR,—There is a gentleman, rather the worse for wear, at Ryan's 4th ward polls, who goes under the cognomen of Edgar A. Poe, and who appears in great distress, and he says he is acquainted with you, and I assure you he is in need of immediate assistance.

Yours in haste,

JOS. W. WALKER.

To Dr. J. E. SNODGRASS.

What preluded the situation above pictured is a matter of supposition. One report is that Poe started for Philadelphia by rail and got as far as Havre de Grace, when, falling into a stupor, he was brought back to Baltimore and fell into the hands of political toughs at Ryan's Fourth Ward Polls, was drugged, and carried round from polls to polls in the interests of the Whig party. Dr. Snodgrass's own garrulous and garbled account of the affair in "Beadle's Monthly" for 1867 — "The Facts of Poe's Death and Burial" — has been shown by an intelligent writer (Mr. Spencer) in the New York "Herald," March 27, 1881, to be wholly untrustworthy. This gentleman had the whole Poe-Snodgrass correspondence in his possession and copied and printed in "The Herald"[1] many interesting extracts from it, including the "coop letter." We quote from it the following:

"The compositor (Walker) was well-known among the earlier printers upon the Baltimore 'Sun.' He was afterwards drowned while swimming in the Spring

[1] Kindly lent the author by Miss A. F. Poe, of Baltimore.

Gardens. The tavern to which reference was made [in Dr. Snodgrass's account] was in East Lombard Street, a door or two east of High Street. Dr. Snodgrass himself lived on High Street at that time, within a block or two of the tavern, and it was probably his immediate proximity as much as anything else, which prompted Walker to send for him. Poe was manifestly very ill, though he did not die until the following Sunday morning (this note was written on Wednesday night). . . . It will be noticed that, in spite of the fact that Snodgrass had the original of this note in his possession, he preferred to quote it from memory, and in so doing, utterly perverted its contents. He gave the wrong day of the month, the wrong day of the week, the wrong name for the tavern, and an absolutely false and illusory statement of the printer's representations as to Poe's condition. 'A gentleman rather the worse for wear,' who 'appears in great distress,' and is in evident 'need of immediate assistance,' is put down as being 'in a state of beastly intoxication and evident destitution.' Walker speaks of a gentleman and stranger, who is so ill as to excite his sympathy and cause alarm; Snodgrass makes him speak of a drunken and penniless loafer. Griswold, of course, makes worse out of Snodgrass's bad enough. He assigns Thursday, October 4, as the day, speaks of a 'night of exposure and insanity,' etc., 'resolutions and duties forgotten,' and all the rest of an infamous rigmarole.

"What are the actual facts in regard to Edgar A. Poe's death? The Baltimore 'Sun' of October 8, 1849, has only this announcement:

"'We regret to learn that Edgar A. Poe, Esq., the distinguished American poet, scholar, and critic, died

in this city yesterday morning, after an illness of four or five days. This announcement, coming so sudden and unexpected, will cause poignant regret among all who admire genius and have sympathies for the frailties too often attending it. Mr. Poe, we believe, was a native of this State, though reared by a foster-father at Richmond, Va., where he lately spent some time on a visit. He was in the thirty-eighth year of his age.'

"Let us suppose," continues Mr. Spencer, not noticing the errors as to the place and time of Poe's birth, "that Poe arrived in Baltimore on Wednesday, October 3, 1849, not entirely free from the effects of bad hours in the capital of Virginia. He must have reached the city in the forenoon, and, whether he came by rail or by steamboat, he would have naturally and almost instinctively gone to the United States Hotel (the present Maltby House), opposite which, at that time, was the dépôt of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

"Poe was a Whig in politics. There was an election going on that day, a very wet and disagreeable one, for members of Congress and members of the State Legislature. If Poe had been drinking at all, and it is altogether likely that he had, he would talk, and on election day all men talk politics.

"Eight blocks east of the hotel where he [presumably] was, was High Street, and in the rear of an engine-house in this vicinity the 'Fourth Ward Club,' a notorious Whig organization, had their 'coop.' There was no registry of voters at this time in Baltimore, and almost any one could vote who was willing to face the ordeal of a 'challenge' and the oath administered by a judge of elections. Hence, personal

voting 'material' was valuable, and the roughs of the period, instead of acting as rounders themselves, used to capture and 'coop' innocent strangers and foreigners, drug them with bad whiskey and opiates, and send them round to the different voting-places under custody of one or two of their party, 'to help the cause.' The system of 'cooping' probably culminated in this year, 1849, and, if the writer's memory does not play him a trick, the 'coop' of the Democrats on Lexington Street, near Eutaw, in the rear of the 'New Market' engine-house, had 75 prisoners, while that of the Whigs, on High Street, had 130 to 140 — the equivalent of 600 votes.

"The prisoners in these 'coops,' chiefly foreigners, strangers, countrymen, fared wretchedly. They were often, at the outstart, and in the most unexpected way, drugged with opiates and such other delirifaciants as would be most likely to keep them from being troublesome and prevent them from resenting their outrageous treatment. They were thrust into cellars and backyards, and kept under lock and key, without light, without beds, without provisions for decency, without food. Only one thing they were supplied with, and that was a sufficient deluge of whiskey to keep their brains all the time sodden, and prevent them from imparting intelligibility to their complaints.

"The Whig 'coop' in the Fourth Ward, on High Street, was within two squares of the place where Poe was 'found.' It is altogether possible . . . that Poe was 'cooped' and that his outlaw custodians, discovering too late the disastrous effects of their infamous decoctions upon the delicate tissues and convolutions of his finely organized brain, sought to repair some of the damage they had done, and caused inquiry to be

made for the friends of the man they had murdered. Too late!

"Poe was taken that night to the hospital, which is now called the 'Church Home' (on North Broadway), suffering from a violent brain fever of a congestive character. He never recovered consciousness, he made no dying speeches and remarks, and his little candle, which now shines so far, went out very briefly about daybreak on Sunday morning, October 7."

Such were in all probability the environing circumstances of the death of the great lyrist.

Of Dr. J. J. Moran's account of the poet's last hours and his dying declarations,[1] written thirty-five years after the events, one can say that it is romantically interesting, but not convincing. Judge Neilson Poe, his third cousin, who was at the hospital constantly until he died, asserted that he never regained consciousness. Dr. Snodgrass, who wrote in 1867, seventeen years after the catastrophe, asserts that he was conscious, and adds (if we may believe them) the following particulars: —

"The Washington Hospital having been fixed upon, a messenger was despatched to procure a carriage. While awaiting its arrival, I had an opportunity to observe more closely than I had taken time to do previously, the condition and apparel of the strangely metamorphosed being in the bar-room who wore a name which was a synonym for genius — the first glance at whose *tout ensemble* was well calculated to recall Poe's own so frequently hinted doctrine of the

[1] A Defence of Edgar Allan Poe: Life, Character, and Dying Declarations of the Poet: An Official Account of his Death by his Attending Physician, John J. Moran, M.D., Washington, D.C.: 1885.

metempsychosis. His face was haggard, not to say bloated and unwashed, his hair unkempt, and his whole physique repulsive. His expansive forehead, with its wonderful breadth between the points where the phrenologists locate the organ of ideality — the widest I ever measured — and that full-orbed and mellow yet soulful eye, for which he was so noticeable when himself, now lustreless and vacant, as shortly I could see, were shaded from view by a rusty, almost brimless, tattered and ribbonless palm-leaf hat. His clothing consisted of a sack-coat of thin and slazy black alpaca, ripped more or less at several of its seams, and faded and soiled, and pants of a steel-mixed pattern of cassinette, half-worn and badly-fitting, if they could be said to fit at all. He wore neither vest nor neck-cloth, while the bosom of his shirt was both crumpled and badly soiled. On his feet were boots of coarse material, and giving no sign of having been blacked for a long time, if at all.

"The carriage having arrived, we tried to get the object of our care upon his feet, so that he might the more easily be taken to it. But he was past locomotion. We therefore carried him to the coach as if he were a corpse, and lifted him in in the same manner. While we were doing this, what was left of one of the most remarkable embodiments of genius the world has produced in all the centuries of its history — the author of a single poem which alone has been adjudged by more than one critic as entitling its producer to a lasting and enviable fame — was so utterly voiceless as to be capable of only muttering some scarcely intelligible oaths, and other forms of imprecation upon those who were trying to rescue him from destitution and disgrace.

"The carriage was driven directly to the hospital, where its unconscious occupant was assigned to the care of its intelligent and kindly resident physician [Dr. J. J. Moran].

". . . He lived nearly a week, instead of dying 'next day,' as one account has it, or in a 'few hours,' as another records it, dying on the 7th of the same month, Monday [Sunday]. Besides, it might convey the idea that he had no lucid moments. But he had, and in one of these an incident transpired which, while its mention may serve to extend the already long, as well as interesting record of the last words of noted men, it will be recognized as anything but characteristic of Mr. Poe, who was always haunted by a terrible though vague apprehension of death and the grave. When the hospital physician became satisfied that the author of 'William Wilson' — a favorite tale of Mr. Poe — and of 'The Raven' — had written his last story and his last poem, he addressed him concernedly and kindly, saying: 'Mr. Poe, it is my painful duty to inform you that you have, in my judgment, only a very short time to live. If you have any friends whom you would like to see, name them, and your wish shall be gratified; I will summon them.'

"'Friends!' exclaimed the dying son of genius — 'friends!' repeating the word for a moment as if it had no longer a definite meaning; 'my best friend would be he who would take a pistol and blow out these d—d wretched brains!' pressing his hand to his forehead as he uttered the awful imprecation."

Fortunately, however, we are not dependent upon Dr. Snodgrass's harrowing account as our sole testimony for Poe's last hours: there is in existence a letter from Dr. J. J. Moran to Mrs. Clemm, written five

or six weeks after the event, which gives an account of bare facts without the romantic coloring of Dr. Moran's later statement, at the same time relieving the sufferer of the stain of dying with an imprecation on his lips:

BALTIMORE CITY MARINE HOSPITAL,
November 15, '49.

MRS. CLEMM:

MY DEAR MADAM, — I take the earliest opportunity of responding to yours of the 9th inst., which came to hand by yesterday's mail. . . .

But now for the required intelligence. Presuming you are already aware of the malady of which Mr. Poe died, I need only state concisely the particulars of his circumstances from his entrance until his decease.

When brought to the hospital he was unconscious of his condition — who brought him or with whom he had been associating. He remained in this condition from five o'clock in the afternoon — the hour of his admission — until three next morning. This was on the 3d October.

To this state succeeded tremor of the limbs, and at first a busy but not violent or active delirium — constant talking — and vacant converse with spectral and imaginary objects on the walls. His face was pale and his whole person drenched in perspiration. We were unable to induce tranquillity before the second day after his admission.

Having left orders with the nurses to that effect, I was summoned to his bedside so soon as consciousness supervened, and questioned him in reference to his family, place of residence, relatives, etc. But his answers were incoherent and unsatisfactory. He told me, however, he had a wife in Richmond (which I have since learned was not the fact), that he did not know when he left that city, or what had become of his trunk of clothing. Wishing to rally and sustain his now fast sinking hopes,

I told him I hoped that in a few days he would be able to enjoy the society of his friends here, and I would be most happy to contribute in every possible way to his ease and comfort. At this he broke out with much energy, and said the best thing his best friend could do would be to blow out his brains with a pistol — that when he beheld his degradation, he was ready to sink into the earth, etc. Shortly after giving expression to these words, Mr. Poe seemed to doze, and I left him for a short time. When I returned I found him in a violent delirium, resisting the efforts of two nurses to keep him in bed. This state continued until Saturday evening (he was admitted on Wednesday), when he commenced calling for one "Reynolds,"[1] which he did through the night until *three* on Sunday morning. At this time a very decided change began to affect him. Having become enfeebled from exertion, he became quiet, and seemed to rest for a short time; then gently moving his head, he said, "*Lord help my poor soul!*" and expired.

This, Madam, is as faithful an account as I am able to furnish from the Record of his case.

. . . His remains were visited by some of the first individuals of the city, many of them anxious to have a lock of his hair. . . .

Respectfully yours,

J. J. MORAN, *Res. Phys.*[2]

His relatives, Judge Neilson Poe and Mr. Henry Herring, took charge of the remains, which were buried Monday afternoon in the churchyard attached to Westminster Presbyterian Church, corner of Fayette and Greene Streets, the Rev. W. T. D. Clemm

[1] This Reynolds may have been the author of the "Address on the South Sea Expedition" — a project in which Poe was deeply interested and which doubtless gave him ideas for "Arthur Gordon Pym."

[2] Miss A. F. Poe, MS.

reading the burial service of the Methodist Episcopal church. Only a few friends witnessed the solemn rites, among them his class-mate at the University of Virginia, Hon. Z. Collins Lee, Poe's cousin, Edmund Smith, Dr. Snodgrass, the officiating clergyman, and Mr. N. Poe.

His trunk and clothes were sought in vain: they had most probably been stolen.

The writer is enabled to supplement these statements by the following interesting recollections of Mrs. J. J. Moran, furnished him by her nephew, Mr. J. B. Green, of the University of Virginia:

"Mrs. Mary O. Moran, wife of the physician in charge of Washington College Hospital, Baltimore, where Poe died, made substantially the following statement as to his last hours. 'When the young man was brought into the hospital in a stupor, it was supposed he was overcome by drink. It was election time, and the city was very disorderly. We soon saw he was a gentleman; and as our family lived in a wing of the college building, the doctor had him taken to a room easily reached by a passage from our wing. I helped to nurse him here, and during an interval of consciousness he asked if there was any hope for him. Thinking he referred to his physical condition, I said, "My husband thinks you are very ill, and if you have any directions to give regarding your affairs I will write them down." He replied, "I meant, hope for a wretch like me, beyond this life." I assured him that the Great Physician said there was. I then read him the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, gave him a quieting draught, wiped the beads of perspiration from his face, smoothed his pillow, and left him. Not long afterwards they

brought me a message that he was dead. I made his shroud and helped to prepare his body for burial.' "

"It is impossible," says Mr. Ingram, in concluding his sympathetic Memoir — the fullest and best of the biographies of Poe — "to conceive the horror and heart-rending grief of Mrs. Clemm when the intelligence of Poe's death was conveyed to her. She was awaiting his arrival, to bear her away to her native South, and instead of welcoming an affectionate son — happy in the prospect of an anticipated marriage and a prosperous future — she received the tidings of his terrible and mysterious death. In the first moments of her loneliness and anguish she wrote to her best friend, for sympathy, in these terms:

Oct. 8, 1849.

Annie, my Eddy *is dead*. He died in Baltimore yesterday. Annie! pray for me, your desolate friend. My senses *will leave me*. I will write the moment I hear the particulars. I have written to Baltimore. Write and advise me what to do.

Your distracted friend,

M. C.

"Writing again on the 13th of October to the same faithful friend, Mrs. Clemm says:

"'My own dearest Annie, — I am not deceived in you. You *still* wish your poor desolate friend to come to you. . . . I have written to poor Elmira [Mrs. Shelton], and have to wait for her answer. They are already making arrangements to publish the works of my *darling lost one*. I have been waited on by several gentlemen, and have finally arranged with Mr. Griswold to arrange and bring them out, and he wishes it done immediately. Mr. Willis is to share with him this labor of

love. They say that I am to have the *entire* proceeds, so you see, Annie, I will not be entirely destitute. I have had many letters of condolence, and one which has, indeed, comforted me. Neilson Poe, of Baltimore, has written to me, and says he died in the Washington Medical College, not the Hospital, and of congestion of the brain, and not of what the vile, vile papers accuse him. He had many kind friends with him, and was attended to his grave by the *literati* of Baltimore, and many friends. *Severe excitement* (and no doubt some imprudence) brought this on; he never had one interval of reason. . . . Never, oh, never, will I see those dear lovely eyes. I feel *so desolate, so wretched, friendless, and alone.*'" [1]

The poor old woman, now advanced in years, became literally a wanderer on the face of the earth, accepting, first, the hospitality of "Annie," at Lowell, Mass., with whom she resided for a few months ("years," says Ingram), and then staying with "Stella," in Brooklyn, until 1858,[2] when she removed to Baltimore. There she died in "the Church Home and Infirmary," February 16, 1871, more than 80 years of age — the very place where her "Eddy" had died.

At Poe's death a few papers and articles of a miscellaneous nature were found in the hands of publishers and editors, and two of his most striking poems — "The Bells" and "Annabel Lee" — came suddenly to the surface, drawn thither by the solemn reverberation of the news of the poet's death. "Sartain's Union Magazine" for November contained the final version of "The Bells," the design of which,

[1] Ingram, II. p. 239.
[2] Edgar Allan Poe: A Memorial Volume: 1875: p. 86.

as he informed the poet Thompson, was "to express in language the exact sounds of bells to the ear"; and the "Southern Literary Messenger" for November contained "Annabel Lee," prefaced by the following words:

"The day before he [Poe] left Richmond, he placed in our hands for publication in the 'Messenger' the MS. of his last poem, which has since found its way (through a correspondent of a northern paper with whom Mr. Poe had left a copy) into the newspaper press, and been extensively circulated. As it was designed for this magazine, however, we publish it, even though all of our readers may have seen it before."[1]

It seems strange that this tender and beautiful ballad should appear in "The Tribune" for Oct. 9, 1849, almost side by side with the attack on Poe's memory now known to have been written by Griswold — a poem in every line refuting the anonymous assault whose "intense energy of delineation" is pronounced "a piece of writing that has the power of genius and cannot be forgotten while his memory lives."

In "Graham's" for January, 1850, appeared a paper "On Critics and Criticism," and this was followed in October by "The Poetic Principle," in "Sartain's Union Magazine"; completing the tally of Poe's works which, even after death, streamed forth in these puissant channels and taught the world not only what he conceived to be the true theory of poetry but exemplified it in two wondrous poems. "The singular and exquisite genius of Poe," as Swinburne calls it, was thus singular and exquisite to the last breath.

[1] *So. Lit. Mess.* The Late Edgar A. Poe: Nov. 1849, p. 697.

APPENDIX.

POE'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

THE following document possesses a curious interest, being Poe's own account of his early life as furnished by him to Dr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold. The MS. is in the possession of Mrs. Wm. M. Griswold, of Cambridge, Mass., daughter-in-law of Dr. Griswold, by whose courtesy it is here printed for the first time. The reader should compare it with the letter by Poe on his ancestry to be found in our Volume XVII., dated August 20, 1835.

The Memorandum abounds in inaccuracies. The birth-date is wrong by two years: Poe was born in 1809. The elder Mrs. Poe did not die of "consumption" but of pneumonia. Mr. Allan never legally "adopted" Poe, but befriended and reared him and gave him a home. This statement is confirmed by Mrs. S. A. Weiss and Dr. John F. Carter, who are still living and who knew Poe and the Allans intimately. Poe remained only one year (1826, not 1825) at the University of Virginia, not "three," as he states in the Memorandum. The University of Virginia never had a "president;" its executive officer is the Chairman of the Faculty. The runaway trip to Russia is altogether mythical: Poe was a private and then a sergeant-major in the United States army, under the name of Edgar A. Perry, from May 26, 1827, to April 15, 1829, when, having supplied a substitute, he was honorably discharged. Mr. Allan

was not so old as Poe makes him out to be on his second marriage, and he left three children, not "one son," to inherit his large estate. It would be most interesting to know what "two British journals" Poe "wrote continuously for," "whose names he was not permitted to mention." No traces of these contributions have been found; perhaps they were never printed.

MEMORANDUM.

Memo. Born January, 1811. Family one of the oldest and most respectable in Baltimore. Gen. David Poe, my paternal grandfather, was a quarter-master general, in the Maryland line, during the Revolution, and the intimate friend of Lafayette, who, during his visit to the U. S., called personally upon the Gen.'s widow, and tendered her his warmest acknowledgments for the services rendered him by her husband. His father, John Poe, married, in England, Jane, a daughter of Admiral James McBride, noted in British naval history, and claiming kindred with many of the most illustrious houses of Great Britain. My father and mother died within a few weeks of each other, of consumption, leaving me an orphan at two years of age. Mr. John Allan, a very wealthy gentleman of Richmond, Va., took a fancy to me, and persuaded my grandfather, Gen. Poe, to suffer him to adopt me. Was brought up in Mr. A.'s family, and regarded always as his son and heir — he having no other children. In 1816 went with Mr. A.'s family to G. Britain — visited every portion of it — went to school for 5 years to the Rev. Doctor Bransby, at Stoke Newington, then 4 miles from London. Re-

turned to America in 1822. In 1825 went to the Jefferson University at Charlottesville, Va., where for 3 years I led a very dissipated life — the college at that period being shamefully dissolute. Dr. Dunglison of Philadelphia, President. Took the first honors, however, and came home greatly in debt. Mr. A. refused to pay some of the debts of *honor*, and I ran away from home without a dollar on a quixotic expedition to join the Greeks, then struggling for liberty. Failed in reaching Greece, but made my way to St. Petersburg, in Russia. Got into many difficulties, but was extricated by the kindness of Mr. H. Middleton, the American consul at St. P. Came home safe in 1829, found Mrs. A. dead, and immediately went to West Point as a Cadet. In about 18 months afterwards Mr. A. married a second time (a Miss Patterson, a near relative of Gen. Winfield Scott) — he being then 65 years of age. Mrs. A. and myself quarrelled, and he, siding with her, wrote me an angry letter, to which I replied in the same spirit. Soon afterwards he died, having had a son by Mrs. A., and, although leaving a vast property, bequeathed me nothing. The army does not suit a poor man — so I left W. Point abruptly, and threw myself upon literature as a resource. I became first known to the literary world thus. A Baltimore weekly paper (The Visiter) offered two premiums — one for best prose story, one for best poem. The Committee awarded both to me, and took occasion to insert in the journal a card, signed by themselves, in which I was very highly flattered. The Committee were John P. Kennedy (author of Horse-Shoe Robinson), J. H. B. Latrobe and Dr. I. H. Miller. Soon after this I was invited by Mr. T. W. White, proprietor of the

South. Lit. Messenger, to edit it. Afterwards wrote for New York Review at the invitation of Dr. Hawks and Professor Henry, its proprietors. Lately have written articles continuously for two British journals whose names I am not permitted to mention. In my engagement with Burton, it was not my design to let my name appear — but he tricked me into it.

Written on half sheet evidently used for an envelope, marks of seal left on back, stamp, "(paid) 1 J. B." x part of an address, severed by scissors-cut:

"ld, Esqre.,
oston,
Mass." T

MRS. CLEMM'S PREFACE TO THE GRISWOLD EDITION.[1]

THE late Edgar Allan Poe, who was the husband of my only daughter, the son of my eldest brother, and more than a son to myself, in his long continued and affectionate observance of every duty to me,—under an impression that he might be called suddenly from the world, wrote (just before he left his home in Fordham, for the last time, on the 29th of June, 1849) requests that the Rev. Rufus W. Griswold should act as his Literary Executor, and superintend the publication of his works;—and that N. P. Willis, Esq., should write such observations upon his life and character, as he might deem suitable to address to thinking men, in vindication of his memory.

These requests he made with less hesitation, and

[1] This edition of Poe's works was copyrighted by J. S. Redfield in 1849, appearing first in two volumes, then with a third volume containing the notorious Memoir, and finally ending with a fourth and last volume in 1856. It will be noticed that Mrs. Clemm's preface is prefixed gratefully to the volumes that had no Memoir, she apparently never having been cognizant of Griswold's intention to write her nephew's life: Mrs. Estelle Anna Lewis had been specially requested by Poe himself, when they parted, to do this, and N. P. Willis had been invited to assist with a biographical Notice. This appeared in "The Home Journal" the Saturday after Poe died, and is incorporated with James Russell Lowell's sketch in the 1849 edition. See succeeding pages for the Griswold, Willis, and Lowell articles.

What must have been the poor lady's horror and indignation when she read the Memoir, "a concentration of hatred and malice that had already done duty . . . in the 'International Magazine'"! After reading it, she never ceased to speak of its author as "that villain."—ED.

with confidence that they would be fulfilled, from his knowledge of these gentlemen; and he many times expressed a gratification of such an opportunity of decidedly and unequivocally certifying his respect for the literary judgment and integrity of Mr. Griswold, with whom his personal relations, on account of some unhappy misunderstanding, had for years been interrupted.

In this edition of my son's works, which is published for my benefit, it is a great pleasure for me to thank Mr. Griswold and Mr. Willis for their prompt fulfilment of the wishes of the dying poet, in labors which demanded much time and attention, and which they have performed without any other recompense than the happiness which rewards acts of duty and kindness. I add to these expressions of gratitude to them, my acknowledgments to J. R. Lowell, Esquire, for his notices of Mr. Poe's genius and writings which are here published. MARIA CLEMM.

THE "LUDWIG ARTICLE."

BY R. W. GRISWOLD.[1]

[New York Tribune (Evening Edition), October 9, 1849.]

Edgar Allan Poe is dead. He died in Baltimore the day before yesterday. This announcement will

[1] On April 2, 1850, Walter Colton wrote to Griswold as follows: "I have read your criticism on E. A. Poe; it is terrific, but not more so than the moral aspects of your subject. In literary execution it rivals the best passages in Macaulay. I knew

startle many, *but few will be grieved by it.* The poet was well known personally or by reputation, in all this country; he had readers in England, and in several of the states of Continental Europe; *but be had few or no friends;* and the regrets for his death will be suggested principally by the consideration that in him literary art lost one of its most brilliant, but erratic stars.

The family of Mr. Poe, we learn from Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America," from which a considerable portion of the facts in this notice are derived, was one of the oldest and most respectable in Baltimore. David Poe, his paternal grandfather, was a Quartermaster-General in the Maryland line during the Revolution, and the intimate friend of Lafayette, who during his last visit to the United States, called personally upon the General's widow, and tendered her acknowledgments for the services rendered to him by her husband. His great-grandfather, John Poe, married in England, Jane, a daughter of Admiral James McBride, noted in British naval history, and claiming kindred with some of the most illustrious English families. His father and mother,—both of whom were in some way connected with the theatre, and lived as precariously as their more gifted, and more eminent son,—died within a few weeks of each other, of consumption, leaving him an orphan at two years of age. Mr. John Allan, a wealthy gentleman of Richmond, took a fancy to him, and persuaded his grandfather to suffer him to adopt him. He was brought up in Mr. Allan's family; and as that gentle-

something of Poe — something of the unfathomed gulfs of darkness out of which the lightning of his genius sent its scorching flashes. . . ."

man had no other children, he was regarded as his son and heir. In 1816 he accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Allan to Great Britain, visited every portion of it, and afterward passed four or five years in a school kept at [Stoke] Newington, near London, by Rev. Dr. Bransby. He returned to America in 1822, and in 1825 went to the Jefferson University, at Charlottesville, in Virginia, where he led a very dissipated life, the manners of the College at that time being extremely dissolute. He took the first honors, however, and went home greatly in debt. Mr. Allan refused to pay some of his debts of *honor*, and he hastily quitted the country on a quixotic expedition to join the Greeks, then struggling for liberty. He did not reach his original destination, however, but made his way to St. Petersburg, in Russia, when he became involved in difficulties, from which he was extricated by the late Henry Middleton, the American Minister at that Capital. He returned home in 1829, and immediately afterwards entered the Military Academy at West-Point. In about eighteen months from that time, Mr. Allan, who had lost his first wife while Mr. Poe was in Russia, married again. He was sixty-five years of age, and the lady was young; Poe quarrelled with her, and the veteran husband, taking the part of his wife, addressed him an angry letter, which was answered in the same spirit. He died soon after, leaving an infant son heir to his property, and bequeathing Poe nothing.

The army, in the opinion of the young poet, was not a place for a poor man; so he left West Point abruptly, and determined to maintain himself by authorship. He printed, in 1827, a small volume of poems, most of which were written in early youth.

Some of these poems are quoted in a reviewal by Margaret Fuller, in *The Tribune* in 1846, and are justly regarded as among the most wonderful exhibitions of the precocious developments of genius. They illustrated the character of his abilities, and justified his anticipations of success. For a considerable time, however, though he wrote readily and brilliantly, his contributions to the journals attracted little attention, and his hopes of gaining a livelihood by the profession of literature was nearly ended at length in sickness, poverty and despair.

But in 1831,[1] the proprietor of a weekly gazette, in Baltimore, offered two premiums, one for the best story in prose, and the other for the best poem.

In due time Poe sent in two articles, and he waited anxiously for the decision. One of the Committee was the accomplished author of "Horseshoe Robinson," John P. Kennedy, and his associates were scarcely less eminent than he for wit and critical sagacity. Such matters were usually disposed of in a very off-hand way; committees to award literary prizes drink to the payer's health, in good wines, over the unexamined MSS., which they submit to the discretion of the publisher, with permission to use their names in such a way as to promote the publisher's advantage. So it would have been in this case, but that one of the Committee,[2] taking up a small book, in such exquisite caligraphy as to seem like one of the finest issues of the press of Putnam, was tempted to read several pages, and being interested, he summonsed the attention of the company to the half-dozen compositions in the volume. It was unanimously decided that the

[1] 1833. — Ed.

[2] See notice of "The Folio Club," Vol. II. — Ed.

prizes should be paid to the first of geniuses who had written legibly. Not another MS. was unfolded. Immediately the confidential envelope was opened, and the successful competitor was found to bear the scarcely known name of Poe.

The next day the publisher called to see Mr. Kennedy, and gave him an account of the author that excited his curiosity and sympathy, and caused him to request that he should be brought to his office. Accordingly he was introduced; the prize money had not yet been paid, and he was in the costume in which he had answered the advertisement of his good fortune. Thin, and pale even to ghastliness, his whole appearance indicated sickness and the utmost destitution. A tattered frock-coat concealed the absence of a shirt, and the ruins of boots disclosed more than the want of stockings. But the eyes of the young man were luminous with intelligence and feeling, and his voice and conversation, and manners, all won upon the lawyer's regard. Poe told his history, and his ambitions, and it was determined that he should not want means for a suitable appearance in society, nor opportunity for a just display of his abilities in literature. Mr. Kennedy accompanied him to a clothing store, and purchased for him a respectable suit, with changes of linen, and sent him to a bath, from which he returned with the suddenly regained bearing of a gentleman.

The late Mr. Thomas W. White had then recently established *The Southern Literary Messenger*, at Richmond, and upon the warm recommendation of Mr. Kennedy, Poe was engaged at a small salary — we believe of $500 a year — to be its editor. He entered upon his duties with letters full of expressions of

the warmest gratitude to his friends in Baltimore, who in five or six weeks were astonished to learn that with characteristic recklessness of consequence, he was hurriedly married to a girl as *poor as himself*. Poe continued in this situation for about a year and a half, in which he wrote many brilliant articles, and raised the *Messenger* to the first rank of literary periodicals.

He next removed to Philadelphia, to assist William E. Burton in the editorship of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a miscellany that in 1840 was merged in *Graham's Magazine*, of which Poe became one of the principal writers, particularly in criticism, in which his papers attracted much attention by their careful and skilful analysis, and general caustic severity. At this period, however, he appeared to have been more ambitious of securing distinction in romantic fiction, and a collection of his compositions in this department, published in 1841,[1] under the title of Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque, established his reputation for ingenuity, imagination, and extraordinary power in tragical narration.

Near the end of 1844 Poe removed to New York, where he conducted for several months a literary miscellany called the *Broadway Journal*. In 1845 he published a volume of "Tales" in Wiley and Putnam's "Library of American Books;" and in the same series a collection of his poems. Besides these poems he was the author of "Arthur Gordon Pym," a romance; "Eureka," an essay on the spiritual and material universe; a work which he wishes to have "judged as a poem;" and several extended series of papers in the periodicals, the most noteworthy of which are "Marginalia," embracing opinions of books and

[1] 1840. — Ed.

authors ; "Secret Writing," "Autography ;" and "Sketches of the Literati of New York."

His wife died in 1847, at Fordham, near this city, and some of our readers will remember the paragraphs in the papers of the time, upon his destitute condition. We remember that Col. Webb collected in a few moments fifty or sixty dollars for him at the Metropolitan Club; Mr. Lewis, of Brooklyn, sent a similar sum from one of the courts, in which he was engaged when he saw the statement of the poet's poverty; and others illustrated in the same manner the effect of such an appeal to the popular heart.

Since that time Mr. Poe had lived quietly, and with an income from his literary labors sufficient for his support. A few weeks ago he proceeded to Richmond, in Virginia, where he lectured upon the poetical character, etc.; and it was understood by some of his correspondents here that he was this week to be married, most advantageously, to a lady of that city, a widow, to whom he had been previously engaged while a student in the University.

The character of Mr. Poe we cannot attempt to describe in this very hastily written article. We can but allude to some of the more striking phases.

His conversation was at times almost supra-mortal in its eloquence. His voice was modulated with astonishing skill, and his large and variably expressive eyes looked repose or shot fiery tumult into theirs who listened, while his own face glowed or was changeless in pallor, as his imagination quickened his blood, or drew it back frozen to his heart. His imagery was from the worlds which no mortal can see but with the vision of genius. Suddenly starting from a proposition exactly and sharply defined in terms of utmost sim-

plicity and clearness, he rejected the forms of customary logic, and in a crystalline process of accretion, built up his ocular demonstrations in forms of gloomiest and ghostliest grandeur, or in those of the most airy and delicious beauty, so minutely, and so distinctly, yet so rapidly, that the attention which was yielded to him was chained till it stood among his wonderful creations — till he himself dissolved the spell, and brought his hearers back to common and base existence, by vulgar fancies or by exhibitions of the ignoble passions.

He was at times a dreamer — dwelling in ideal realms — in heaven or hell, peopled with creations and the accidents of his brain. He walked the streets, in madness or melancholy, with lips moving in indistinct curses, or with eyes upturned in passionate prayers, (never for himself, for he felt, or professed to feel, that he was already damned,) but for their happiness who at that moment were objects of his idolatry; or with his glance introverted to a heart gnawed with anguish, and with a face shrouded in gloom, he would brave the wildest storms; and all night, with drenched garments and arms wildly beating the wind and rain, he would speak as if to spirits that at such times only could be evoked by him from that Aidenn close by whose portals his disturbed soul sought to forget the ills to which his constitution subjected him — close by that Aidenn where were those he loved — the Aidenn which he might never see but in fitful glimpses, as its gates opened to receive the less fiery and more happy natures whose listing to sin did not involve the doom of death. He seemed, except when some fitful pursuit subjected his will and engrossed his faculties, always to bear the memory of some controlling sorrow. The re-

markable poem of *The Raven* was probably much more nearly than has been supposed, even by those who were very intimate with him, a reflection and an echo of his own history. He was the bird's

> — unhappy master,
> Whom unmerciful disaster
> Followed fast and followed faster
> Till his song the burden bore —
> Melancholy burden bore
> Of "Nevermore," of "Nevermore."

Every genuine author in a greater or less degree leaves in his works, whatever their design, traces of his personal character; elements of his immortal being, in which the individual survives the person. While we read the pages of the *Fall of the House of Usher*, or of *Mesmeric Revelation*, we see in the solemn and stately gloom which invests one, and in the subtle metaphysical analysis of both, indications of the idiosyncracies, — of what was most peculiar — in the author's intellectual nature. But we see here only the better phases of this nature, only the symbols of his juster action, for his harsh experience had deprived him of all faith in man or woman.

He had made up his mind upon the numberless complexities of the social world, and the whole system was with him an imposture. This conviction gave a direction to his shrewd and naturally unamiable character. Still though he regarded society as composed of villains, the sharpness of his intellect was not of that kind which enabled him to cope with villainy, while it continually caused him overshots, to fail of the success of honesty. He was in many respects like Francis Vivian in Bulwer's novel of the "Caxtons." Passion, in him, comprehended many of the worst

emotions which militate against human happiness. You could not contradict him, but you raised quick choler; you could not speak of wealth, but his cheek paled with gnawing envy. The astonishing natural advantage of this poor boy — his beauty, his readiness, the daring spirit that breathed around him like a fiery atmosphere — had raised his constitutional self-confidence into an arrogance that turned his very claims to admiration into prejudice against him. Irascible, envious — bad enough, but not the worst, for these salient angles were all varnished over with a cold repellant cynicism while his passions vented themselves in sneers. There seemed to him no moral susceptibility; and what was more remarkable in a proud nature, little or nothing of the true point of honor. He had, to a morbid excess, that desire to rise which is vulgarly called ambition, but no wish for the esteem or the love of his species; only the hard wish to succeed — not shine, not serve — succeed, that he might have the right to despise a world which galled his self-conceit.

We have suggested the influence of his aims and vicissitudes upon his literature. It was more conspicuous in his later than his earlier writing. Nearly all that he wrote in the last two or three years — including much of his best poetry — was in some sense biographical; in draperies of his imagination, those who had taken the trouble to trace his steps, could perceive, but slightly covered, the figure of himself.

There are perhaps some of our readers who will understand the allusions of the following beautiful poem. Mr. Poe presented it in MS. to the writer of these paragraphs, just before he left New York recently, remarking it was the last thing he had written.

It was many and many a year ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
And we loved with a love that was more than love —
I and my ANNABEL LEE;
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The Angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me —
Yes! — that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.

But our love it was stronger by far than love
Of those who were older than we —
Of many far wiser than we —
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams,
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE;

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling — my darling — my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

We must omit any particular criticism of Mr. Poe's works. As a writer of tales it will be admitted generally, that he was scarcely surpassed in ingenuity of construction or effective painting; as a critic, he was more remarkable as a dissector of sentences than as a commenter upon ideas. *He was little better than a carping grammarian.* As a poet, he will retain a most honorable rank. Of his "Raven," Mr. Willis observes, that in his opinion, "it is the most effective single example of fugitive poetry ever published in this country, and is unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conceptions, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift." In poetry, as in prose, he was most successful in the metaphysical treatment of the passions. His poems are constructed with wonderful ingenuity, and finished with consummate art. They illustrate a morbid sensitiveness of feeling, a shadowy and gloomy imagination, and a taste almost faultless in the apprehension of that sort of beauty most agreeable to his temper.

We have not learned the circumstance of his death. It was sudden, and from the fact that it occurred in Baltimore, it is presumed that he was on his return to New York.

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

LUDWIG.[1]

1 "Diary: Oct. 8 [1849]. Wrote, hastily, two or three columns about Poe, for the 'Tribune.'

Diary: Oct. 16. — Call on Mrs. Lewis, to assort, at her home, Poe's papers.

Diary: Oct. 17. — The affairs of Poe." — Passages from the Correspondence of R. W. Griswold: 1898: p. 252–3.

DEATH OF EDGAR A. POE.[1]

By N. P. Willis.

The ancient fable of two antagonistic spirits imprisoned in one body equally powerful and having the complete mastery by turns — of one man, that is to say, inhabited by both a devil and an angel — seems to have been realized, if all we hear is true, in the character of the extraordinary man whose name we have written above. Our own impression of the nature of Edgar A. Poe differs in some important degree, however, from that which has been generally conveyed in the notices of his death. Let us, before telling what we personally know of him, copy a graphic and highly finished portraiture, from the pen of Dr. Rufus W. Griswold, which appeared in a recent number of the *Tribune:* —[2]

. . . . . .

Apropos of the disparaging portion of the above well-written sketch, let us truthfully say: —

Some four or five years since, when editing a daily paper in this city, Mr. Poe was employed by us, for several months, as critic and sub-editor. This was our first personal acquaintance with him. He resided with his wife and mother at Fordham, a few miles out of town, but was at his desk in the office from nine in the morning till the evening paper went to press. With the highest admiration for his genius, and a willingness to let it atone for more than ordinary irregularity, we were led by common report to expect a very capri-

[1] These remarks were published by Mr. Willis, in the "Home Journal," on the Saturday following Mr. Poe's death.

[2] The preceding Ludwig article.

cious attention to his duties, and occasionally a scene of violence and difficulty. Time went on, however, and he was invariably punctual and industrious. With his pale, beautiful, and intellectual face as a reminder of what genius was in him, it was impossible, of course, not to treat him always with deferential courtesy, and to our occasional request that he would not probe too deep in a criticism, or that he would erase a passage colored too highly with his resentments against society and mankind, he readily and courteously assented, — far more yielding than most men, we thought, on points so excusably sensitive. With a prospect of taking the lead in another periodical, he at last voluntarily gave up his employment with us, and through all this considerable period we had seen but one presentment of the man, — a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability.

Residing as he did in the country, we never met Mr. Poe in hours of leisure; but he frequently called on us afterwards at our place of business, and we met him often in the street, — invariably the same sad-mannered, winning, and refined gentleman such as we had always known him. It was by rumor only, up to the day of his death, that we knew of any other development of manner or character. We heard, from one who knew him well (what should be stated in all mention of his lamentable irregularities), that, with a *single glass* of wine, his whole nature was reversed, the demon became uppermost, and, though none of the usual signs of intoxication were visible, his *will* was palpably insane. Possessing his reasoning faculties in excited activity at such times, and seeking his ac-

quaintances with his wonted look and memory, he easily seemed personating only another phase of his natural character, and was accused, accordingly, of insulting arrogance and bad-heartedness. In this reversed character, we repeat, it was never our chance to see him. We know it from hearsay, and we mention it in connection with this sad infirmity of physical constitution, which puts it upon very nearly the ground of a temporary and almost irresponsible insanity.

The arrogance, vanity, and depravity of heart of which Mr. Poe was generally accused seem to us referable altogether to this reversed phase of his character. Under that degree of intoxication which only acted upon him by demonizing his sense of truth and right, he doubtless said and did much that was wholly irreconcilable with his better nature; but when himself, and as we knew him only, his modesty and unaffected humility, as to his own deservings, were a constant charm to his character. His letters (of which the constant application for autographs has taken from us, we are sorry to confess, the greater portion) exhibited this quality very strongly. In one of the carelessly written notes of which we chance still to retain possession, for instance, he speaks of "The Raven," — that extraordinary poem which electrified the world of imaginative readers, and has become the type of a school of poetry of its own, — and, in evident earnest, attributes its success to the few words of commendation with which we had prefaced it in this paper. It will throw light on his sane character to give a literal copy of the note: —

FORDHAM, April 20, 1849.

MY DEAR WILLIS, — The poem which I enclose, and which I am so vain as to hope you will like, in some

respects, has been just published in a paper for which sheer necessity compels me to write, now and then. It pays well, as times go — but unquestionably it ought to pay ten prices; for whatever I send it I feel I am consigning to the tomb of the Capulets. The verses accompanying this, may I beg you to take out of the tomb, and bring them to light in the Home Journal? If you can oblige me so far as to copy them, I do not think it will be necessary to say "From the ——," — that would be too bad; — and, perhaps, "From a late —— paper" would do.

I have not forgotten how a "good word in season" from you made "The Raven," and made "Ulalume," (which, by-the-way, people have done me the honor of attributing to you) — therefore I *would* ask you, (if I dared), to say something of these lines — if they please you.

Truly yours ever,
EDGAR A. POE.

In double proof of his earnest disposition to do the best for himself, and of the trustful and grateful nature which has been denied him, we give another of the only three of his notes which we chance to retain: —

FORDHAM, January 22, 1848.

MY DEAR MR. WILLIS, — I am about to make an effort at re-establishing myself in the literary world, and *feel* that I may depend upon your aid.

My general aim is to start a Magazine, to be called "*The Stylus*;" but it would be useless to me, even when established, if not entirely out of the control of a publisher. I mean, therefore, to get up a Journal which shall be *my own*, at all points. With this end in view, I must get a list of, at least, five hundred subscribers to begin with: — nearly two hundred I have already. I propose, however, to go South and West, among my personal and literary friends — old college and West

Point acquaintances — and see what I can do. In order to get the means of taking the first step, I propose to lecture at the Society Library, on Thursday, the 3d of February — and, that there may be no cause of *squabbling*, my subject shall *not be literary* at all. I have chosen a broad text — "The Universe."

Having thus given you *the facts* of the case, I leave all the rest to the suggestions of your own tact and generosity.

Gratefully — *most* gratefully —

Your friend always,

EDGAR A. POE.

Brief and chance-taken as these letters are, we think they sufficiently prove the existence of the very qualities denied to Mr. Poe, — humility, willingness to persevere, belief in another's kindness, and capability of cordial and grateful friendship! Such he assuredly was *when sane*. Such only he has invariably seemed to us, in all we have happened personally to know of him, through a friendship of five or six years. And so much easier is it to believe what we have seen and known than what we *bear of* only, that we remember him but with admiration and respect, — these descriptions of him, when morally insane, seeming to us like portraits, painted in sickness, of a man we have only known in health.

But there is another, more touching and far more forcible, evidence that there *was goodness* in Edgar A. Poe. To reveal it, we are obliged to venture upon the lifting of the veil which sacredly covers grief and refinement in poverty; but we think it may be excused if so we can brighten the memory of the poet, even were there not a more needed and immediate service which it may render to the nearest link broken by his death.

Our first knowledge of Mr. Poe's removal to this city was by a call which we received from a lady who introduced herself to us as the mother of his wife. She was in search of employment for him, and she excused her errand by mentioning that he was ill, that her daughter was a confirmed invalid, and that their circumstances were such as compelled her taking it upon herself. The countenance of this lady, made beautiful and saintly with an evidently complete giving up of her life to privation and sorrowful tenderness, her gentle and mournful voice urging its plea, her long-forgotten but habitually and unconsciously refined manners, and her appealing and yet appreciative mention of the claims and abilities of her son, disclosed at once the presence of one of those angels upon earth that women in adversity can be. It was a hard fate that she was watching over. Mr. Poe wrote with fastidious difficulty, and in a style too much above the popular level to be well paid. He was always in pecuniary difficulty, and, with his sick wife, frequently in want of the merest necessaries of life. Winter after winter, for years, the most touching sight to us, in this whole city, has been that tireless minister to genius, thinly and insufficiently clad, going from office to office with a poem, or an article on some literary subject, to sell — sometimes simply pleading in a broken voice that he was ill, and begging for him — mentioning nothing but that "he was ill," whatever might be the reason for his writing nothing; and never, amid all her tears and recitals of distress, suffering one syllable to escape her lips that could convey a doubt of him, or a complaint, or a lessening of pride in his genius and good intentions. Her daughter died, a year and a half since, but she did not desert him. She continued

his ministering angel, — living with him, caring for him, guarding him against exposure, and, when he was carried away by temptation, amid grief and the loneliness of feelings unreplied to, and awoke from his self-abandonment prostrated in destitution and suffering, *begging* for him still. If woman's devotion, born with a first love, and fed with human passion, hallow its object, as it is allowed to do, what does not a devotion like this — pure, disinterested, and holy as the watch of an invisible spirit — say for him who inspired it?

We have a letter before us, written by this lady, Mrs. Clemm, on the morning in which she heard of the death of this object of her untiring care. It is merely a request that we would call upon her; but we will copy a few of its words, sacred as its privacy is, to warrant the truth of the picture we have drawn above, and add force to the appeal we wish to make for her: —

"I have this morning heard of the death of my darling Eddie. . . . Can you give me any circumstances or particulars? . . . Oh! do not desert your poor friend in this bitter affliction. . . . Ask Mr. —— to come, as I must deliver a message to him from my poor Eddie. . . . I need not ask you to notice his death and to speak well of him. I know you will. But say what an affectionate son he was to me, his poor desolate mother. . . ."

To hedge round a grave with respect, what choice is there between the relinquished wealth and honors of the world and the story of such a woman's unrewarded devotion! Risking what we do, in delicacy, by making it public, we feel — other reasons aside — that it betters the world to make known that there are such ministrations to its erring and gifted. What we

have said will speak to some hearts. There are those who will be glad to know how the lamp, whose light of poetry has beamed on their far-away recognition, was watched over with care and pain, that they may send to her, who is more darkened than they by its extinction, some token of their sympathy. She is destitute and alone. If any, far or near, will send to us what may aid and cheer her through the remainder of her life, we will joyfully place it in her hands.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

By James Russell Lowell.[1]

The situation of American literature is anomalous. It has no centre, or, if it have, it is like that of the sphere of Hermes. It is divided into many systems, each revolving round its several sun, and often presenting to the rest only the faint glimmer of a milk-and-watery way. Our capital city, unlike London or Paris, is not a great central heart, from which life and vigor radiate to the extremities, but resembles more an isolated umbilicus, stuck down as near as may be to the centre of the land, and seeming rather to tell a legend of former usefulness than to serve any present need. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, each has its literature almost more distinct than those of the different dialects of Germany; and the Young Queen of the West has also one of her own, of which some articulate rumor barely has reached us dwellers by the

[1] From "Graham's Magazine," Phila., February, 1845, with a super-caption: — "Our Contributors. — No. XVII."

Atlantic. Meanwhile, a great babble is kept up concerning a national literature, and the country, having delivered itself of the ugly likeness of a paint-bedaubed, filthy savage, smilingly dandles the rag-baby upon her maternal knee, as if it were veritable flesh and blood, and would grow timely to bone and sinew.

But, before we have an American literature, we must have an American criticism. We have, it is true, some scores of "American Macaulays," the faint echoes of defunct originalities, who will discourse learnedly at an hour's notice upon matters, to be even a sciolist in which would ask the patient study and self-denial of years — but, with a few rare exceptions, America is still to seek a profound, original, and æsthetic criticism. Our criticism, which from its nature might be expected to pass most erudite judgment upon the merit of thistles, undertakes to decide upon

"The plant and flower of light."

There is little life in it, little conscientiousness, little reverence; nay, it has seldom the mere physical merit of fearlessness. It may be best likened to an intellectual gathering of chips to keep the critical pot of potatoes or reputations boiling. Too often, indeed, with the cast garments of some pigmy Gifford, or other foreign notoriety, which he has picked up at the rag-fair of literature, our critic sallies forth, a self-dubbed Amadis, armed with a pen, which, more wonderful even than the fairy-gifts in an old ballad, becomes at will either the lance couched terribly at defiant windmills, or the trumpet for a half-penny pæan.

Perhaps there is no task more difficult than the just criticism of cotemporary literature. It is even more grateful to give praise where it is needed than where

it is deserved, and friendship so often reduces the iron stylus of justice into a vague flourish, that she writes what seems rather like an epitaph than a criticism. Yet if praise be given as an alms, we could not drop so poisonous a one into any man's hat. The critic's ink may suffer equally from too large an infusion of nutgalls or of sugar. But it is easier to be generous than to be just, though there are some who find it equally hard to be either, and we might readily put faith in that fabulous direction to the hiding-place of truth, did we judge from the amount of water which we usually find mixed with it.

We were very naturally led into some remarks on American criticism by the subject of the present sketch. Mr. Poe is at once the most discriminating, philosophical, and fearless critic upon imaginative works who has written in America. It may be that we should qualify our remark a little and say that he MIGHT BE, rather than that he always is, for he seems sometimes to mistake his phial of prussic-acid for his inkstand. If we do not always agree with him in his premises, we are, at least, satisfied that his deductions are logical, and that we are reading the thoughts of a man who thinks for himself, and says what he thinks, and knows well what he is talking about. His analytic powers would furnish forth bravely some score of ordinary critics. We do not know him personally, but we suspect him for a man who has one or two pet prejudices on which he prides himself. These sometimes allure him out of the strict path of criticism,[1]

[1] We cannot but think that this was the case in his review of W. E. Channing's poems, in which we are sure that there is much which must otherwise have challenged Mr. Poe's hearty liking. — NOTE BY LOWELL.

but, where they do not interfere, we would put almost entire confidence in his judgments. Had Mr. Poe had the control of a magazine of his own, in which to display his critical abilities, he would have been as autocratic, ere this, in America, as Professor Wilson has been in England; and his criticisms, we are sure, would have been far more profound and philosophical than those of the Scotsman. As it is, he has squared out blocks enough to build an enduring pyramid, but has left them lying carelessly and unclaimed in many different quarries.

Remarkable experiences are usually confined to the inner life of imaginative men, but Mr. Poe's biography displays a vicissitude and peculiarity of interest such as is rarely met with. The offspring of a romantic marriage, and left an orphan at an early age, he was adopted by Mr. Allan, a wealthy Virginian, whose barren marriage-bed seemed the warranty of a large estate to the young poet. Having received a classical education in England, he returned home and entered the University of Virginia, where, after an extravagant course, followed by reformation at the last extremity, he was graduated with the highest honors of his class. Then came a boyish attempt to join the fortunes of the insurgent Greeks, which ended at St. Petersburg, where he got into difficulties through want of a passport, from which he was rescued by the American consul and sent home. He now entered the military academy at West Point, from which he obtained a dismissal on hearing of the birth of a son to his adopted father, by a second marriage, an event which cut off his expectations as an heir. The death of Mr. Allan, in whose will his name was not mentioned, soon after relieved him of all doubt in this re-

gard, and he committed himself at once to authorship for a support. Previously to this, however, he had published (in 1827) a small volume of poems, which soon ran through three editions, and excited high expectations of its author's future distinction in the minds of many competent judges.

That no certain augury can be drawn from a poet's earliest lispings there are instances enough to prove. Shakspeare's first poems, though brimful of vigor and youth and picturesqueness, give but a very faint promise of the directness, condensation and overflowing moral of his maturer works. Perhaps, however, Shakspeare is hardly a case in point, his "Venus and Adonis" having been published, we believe, in his twenty-sixth year. Milton's Latin verses show tenderness, a fine eye for nature, and a delicate appreciation of classic models, but give no hint of the author of a new style in poetry. Pope's youthful pieces have all the sing-song, wholly unrelieved by the glittering malignity and eloquent irreligion of his later productions. Collins' callow namby-pamby died and gave no sign of the vigorous and original genius which he afterward displayed. We have never thought that the world lost more in the "marvelous boy," Chatterton, than a very ingenious imitation of obscure and antiquated dullness. Where he becomes original (as it is called) the interest of ingenuity ceases and he becomes stupid. Kirke White's promises were endorsed by the respectable name of Mr. Southey, but surely with no authority from Apollo. They have the merit of a traditional piety, which, to our mind, if uttered at all, had been less objectionable in the retired closet of a diary, and in the sober raiment of prose. They do not clutch hold of the memory with the drowning per-

tinacity of Watts; neither have they the interest of his occasional simple, lucky beauty. Burns, having fortunately been rescued by his humble station from the contaminating society of the "best models," wrote well and naturally from the first. Had he been unfortunate enough to have had an educated taste, we should have had a series of poems from which, as from his letters, we could sift here and there a kernel from the mass of chaff. Coleridge's youthful efforts give no promise whatever of that poetical genius which produced at once the wildest, tenderest, most original and most purely imaginative poems of modern times. Byron's "Hours of Idleness" would never find a reader except from an intrepid and indefatigable curiosity. In Wordsworth's first preludings there is but a dim foreboding of the creation of an era. From Southey's early poems, a safer augury might have been drawn. They show the patient investigation, the close student of history, and the unwearied explorer of the beauties of predecessors, but they give no assurances of a man who should add aught to stock of household words, or to the rarer and more sacred delights of the fire-side or the arbor. The earliest specimens of Shelley's poetic mind already, also, give tokens of that ethereal sublimation in which the spirit seems to soar above the region of words, but leaves its body, the verse, to be entombed, without hope of resurrection, in a mass of them. Cowley is generally instanced as a wonder of precocity. But his early insipidities show only a capacity for rhyming and for the metrical arrangement of certain conventional combinations of words, a capacity wholly dependent on a delicate physical organization, and an unhappy memory. An early poem is only remarkable when it dis-

plays an effort of *reason*, and the rudest verses in which we can trace some conception of the ends of poetry, are worth all the miracles of smooth juvenile versification. A school-boy, one would say, might acquire the regular see-saw of Pope merely by an association with the motion of the play-ground tilt.

Mr. Poe's early productions show that he could see through the verse to the spirit beneath, and that he already had a feeling that all the life and grace of the one must depend on and be modulated by the will of the other. We call them the most remarkable boyish poems that we have ever read. We know of none that can compare with them for maturity of purpose, and a nice understanding of the effects of language and metre. Such pieces are only valuable when they display what we can only express by the contradictory phrase of *innate experience*. We copy one of the shorter poems written when the author was only *fourteen!* There is a little dimness in the filling up, but the grace and symmetry of the outline are such as few poets ever attain. There is a smack of ambrosia about it.

TO HELEN.

Helen, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand!
The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

It is the *tendency* of the young poet that impresses us. Here is no "withering scorn," no heart "blighted" ere it has safely got into its teens, none of the drawing-room sansculottism which Byron had brought into vogue. All is limpid and serene, with a pleasant dash of the Greek Helicon in it. The melody of the whole, too, is remarkable. It is not of that kind which can be demonstrated arithmetically upon the tips of the fingers. It is that finer sort which the inner ear alone can estimate. It seems simple, like a Greek column, because of its perfection. In a poem named "Ligeia," under which title he intended to personify the music of nature, our boy poet gives us the following exquisite picture:

Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one,
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
Say, is it thy will
On the breezes to toss,
Or, capriciously still,
Like the lone Albatross,
Incumbent on night,
As she on the air,
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?

John Neal, himself a man of genius, and whose lyre has been too long capriciously silent, appreciated the high merit of these and similar passages, and drew a proud horoscope for their author. The extracts

which we shall presently make from Mr. Poe's later poems fully justify his predictions.

Mr. Poe has that indescribable something which men have agreed to call *genius*. No man could ever tell us precisely what it is, and yet there is none who is not inevitably aware of its presence and its power. Let talent writhe and contort itself as it may, it has no such magnetism. Larger of bone and sinew it may be, but the wings are wanting. Talent sticks fast to earth, and its most perfect works have still one foot of clay. Genius claims kindred with the very workings of Nature herself, so that a sunset shall seem like a quotation from Dante or Milton, and if Shakspeare be read in the very presence of the sea itself, his verses shall but seem nobler for the sublime criticism of ocean. Talent may make friends for itself, but only genius can give to its creations the divine power of winning love and veneration. Enthusiasm cannot cling to what itself is unenthusiastic, nor will he ever have disciples who has not himself impulsive zeal enough to be a disciple. Great wits are allied to madness only inasmuch as they are possessed and carried away by their demon, while talent keeps him, as Paracelsus did, securely prisoned in the pommel of its sword. To the eye of genius, the veil of the spiritual world is ever rent asunder, that it may perceive the ministers of good and evil who throng continually around it. No man of mere talent ever flung his inkstand at the devil.

When we say that Mr. Poe has genius, we do not mean to say that he has produced evidence of the highest. But to say that he possesses it at all is to say that he needs only zeal, industry, and a reverence for the trust reposed in him, to achieve the proudest triumphs and the greenest laurels. If we may believe

the Longinuses and Aristotles of our newspapers, we have quite too many geniuses of the loftiest order to render a place among them at all desirable, whether for its hardness of attainment or its seclusion. The highest peak of our Parnassus is, according to these gentlemen, by far the most thickly settled portion of the country, a circumstance which must make it an uncomfortable residence for individuals of a poetical temperament, if love of solitude be, as immemorial tradition asserts, a necessary part of their idiosyncrasy. There is scarce a gentleman or lady of respectable moral character to whom these liberal dispensers of the laurel have not given a ticket to that once sacred privacy, where they may elbow Shakspeare and Milton at leisure. A transient visiter, such as a critic must necessarily be, sees these legitimate proprietors in common, parading their sacred enclosure as thick and buzzing as flies, each with "Entered according to act of Congress" labeled securely to his back. Formerly one Phœbus, a foreigner, we believe, had the monopoly of transporting all passengers thither, a service for which he provided no other conveyance than a vicious horse, named Pegasus, who could, of course, carry but one at a time, and even that but seldom, his back being a ticklish seat, and one fall proving generally enough to damp the ardor of the most zealous aspirant. The charges, however, were moderate, as the poet's pocket formerly occupied that position in regard to the rest of his outfit which is now more usually conceded to his head. But we must return from our little historical digression.

Mr. Poe has two of the prime qualities of genius, a faculty of vigorous yet minute analysis, and a wonderful fecundity of imagination. The first of these facul-

ties is as needful to the artist in words, as a knowledge of anatomy is to the artist in colors or in stone. This enables him to conceive truly, to maintain a proper relation of parts, and to draw a correct outline, while the second groups, fills up, and colors. Both of these Mr. Poe has displayed with singular distinctness in his prose works, the last predominating in his earlier tales, and the first in his later ones. In judging of the merit of an author and assigning him his niche among our household gods, we have a right to regard him from our own point of view, and to measure him by our own standard. But, in estimating his works, we must be governed by his own design, and, placing them by the side of his own ideal, find how much is wanting. We differ with Mr. Poe in his opinions of the objects of art. He esteems that object to be the creation of Beauty,[1] and perhaps it is only in the definition of that word that we disagree with him. But in what we shall say of his writings we shall take his own standard as our guide. The temple of the god of song is equally accessible from every side, and there is room enough in it for all who bring offerings, or seek an oracle.

In his tales, Mr. Poe has chosen to exhibit his power chiefly in that dim region which stretches from the very utmost limits of the probable into the weird confines of superstition and unreality. He combines in a very remarkable manner two faculties which are seldom found united ; a power of influencing the mind of the reader by the impalpable shadows of mystery, and a minuteness of detail which does not leave a pin or a button unnoticed. Both are, in truth, the natural results of the predominating quality of his mind, to

[1] Mr. P.'s proposition is here perhaps somewhat too *generally* stated. — Ed. Mag.

which we have before alluded, analysis. It is this which distinguishes the artist. His mind at once reaches forward to the effect to be produced. Having resolved to bring about certain emotions in the reader, he makes all subordinate parts tend strictly to the common centre. Even his mystery is mathemathical to his own mind. To him x is a known quantity all along. In any picture that he paints, he understands the chemical properties of all his colors. However vague some of his figures may seem, however formless the shadows, to him the outline is as clear and distinct as that of a geometrical diagram. For this reason Mr. Poe has no sympathy with *Mysticism*. The mystic dwells *in* the mystery, is enveloped with it; it colors all his thoughts; it affects his optic nerve especially, and the commonest things get a rainbow edging from it. Mr. Poe, on the other hand, is a spectator *ab extra*. He analyzes, he dissects, he watches

> — with an eye serene,
> The very pulse of the machine,

for such it practically is to him, with wheels and cogs and piston-rods all working to produce a certain end. It is this that makes him so good a critic. Nothing baulks him, or throws him off the scent, *except now and then a prejudice*.

This analyzing tendency of his mind balances the poetical, and, by giving him the patience to be minute, enables him to throw a wonderful reality into his most unreal fancies. A monomania he paints with great power. He loves to dissect these cancers of the mind, and to trace all the subtle ramifications of its roots. In raising images of horror, also, he has a strange success; conveying to us sometimes by a

dusky hint some terrible *doubt* which is the secret of all horror. He leaves to imagination the task of finishing the picture, a task to which only she is competent.

> "For much imaginary work was there;
> Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
> That for Achilles' image stood his spear
> Grasped in an armèd hand; himself behind
> Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind."

We have hitherto spoken chiefly of Mr. Poe's *collected* tales, as by them he is more widely known than by those published since in various magazines, and which we hope soon to see collected. In these he has more strikingly displayed his analytic propensity.

Beside the merit of conception, Mr. Poe's writings have also that of form. His style is highly finished, graceful, and truly classical. It would be hard to find a living author who had displayed such varied powers. As an example of his style, we would refer to one of his tales, "The House of Usher," in the first volume of his "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque." It has a singular charm for us, and we think that no one could read it without being strongly moved by its serene and sombre beauty. Had its author written nothing else, it would alone have been enough to stamp him as a man of genius, and the master of a classic style. In this tale occurs one of the most beautiful of his poems. It loses greatly by being taken out of its rich and appropriate setting, but we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of copying it here. We know no modern poet who might not have been justly proud of it.

THE HAUNTED PALACE.

In the greenest of our valleys,
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace —
Radiant palace — rear'd its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion —
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This — all this — was in the olden
Time, long ago,)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
(Porphyrogene?)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assail'd the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn! — for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)

And round about his home the glory
That blush'd and bloom'd,
Is but a dim remember'd story
Of the old time entomb'd.

And travelers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door,
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh — but smile no more.

Was ever the wreck and desolation of a noble mind so musically sung?

A writer in the "London Foreign Quarterly Review," who did some faint justice to Mr. Poe's poetical abilities, speaks of his resemblance to Tennyson. The resemblance, if there be any, is only in so sensitive an ear to melody as leads him sometimes into quaintness, and the germ of which may be traced in his earliest poems, published several years before the first of Tennyson's appeared.

We copy one more of Mr. Poe's poems, whose effect cannot fail of being universally appreciated.

LENORE.

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! — the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll! — a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river.
And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear? — weep now or nevermore!
See, on yon drear and rigid bier, low lies thy love, Lenore!
Ah, let the burial rite be read — the funeral song be sung —
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young —
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young!

"Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride,
And, when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her — that she died.

How shall the ritual then be read? — the requiem how be sung
By you — by yours the evil eye — by yours the slanderous tongue,
That did to death the innocence that died and died so young?"
Peccavimus; but rave not thou! and let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong.
The sweet Lenore hath "gone before," with Hope that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy bride —
For her the fair and *debonair* that now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes —
The life still there, upon her hair — the death upon her eyes.

"Avaunt! — to-night my heart is light; no dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a pæan of old days!
Let no bell toll! — lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note as it doth float up from the damnèd earth.
To friends above, from friends below, the indignant ghost is riven —
From Hell into a high estate far up within the Heaven —
From moan and groan to a golden throne beside the King of Heaven."

How exquisite, too, is the rhythm!

Besides his "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," and some works unacknowledged, Mr. Poe is the author of "Arthur Gordon Pym," a romance, in two volumes, which has run through many editions in London; of a system of Conchology, of a digest and translation of Lemmonnier's Natural History, and has contributed to several reviews in France, in England, and in this country. He edited the "Southern Literary Messenger" during its novitiate, and by his own contributions gained it most of its success and reputation. He was also, for some time, the editor of this magazine, and our readers will bear testimony to his ability in that capacity.

Mr. Poe is still in the prime of life, being about thirty-two years of age, and has probably as yet given but an earnest of his powers. As a critic, he has

shown so superior an ability that we cannot but hope that he will collect his essays of this kind and give them a more durable form. They would be a very valuable contribution to our literature, and would fully justify all we have said in his praise. We could refer to many others of his poems than those we have quoted, to prove that he is the possessor of a pure and original vein. His tales and essays have equally shown him a master in prose. It is not for us to assign him his definite rank among cotemporary authors, but we may be allowed to say that we know of *none* who has displayed more varied and striking abilities.

EDGAR A. POE.

By P. Pendleton Cooke,

Author of the "Froissart Ballads."

[Southern Literary Messenger, January, 1848.]

(The following paper is a sequel to Mr. Lowell's Memoir, (so-called,) of Mr. Poe, published two or three years since in Graham's Magazine. Mr. P. edited the Messenger for several years, and the pages of that magazine would seem, therefore, a proper place for the few hurried observations which I have made upon his writings and genius. P. P. C.)

Since the memoirs of Mr. Poe, written by James Russell Lowell, appeared, Mr. P. has written some of his best things; amongst them The Raven, and Dreamland — poems — and M. Valdemar's Case — a prose narrative.

"The Raven" is a singularly beautiful poem. Many readers who prefer sunshine to the weird lights with which Mr. Poe fills his sky, may be dull to its beauty, but it is none the less a great triumph of imagination and art. Notwithstanding the extended publication of this remarkable poem, I will quote it almost entire — as the last means of justifying the praise I have bestowed upon it.

The opening stanza rapidly and clearly arranges time, place, etc., for the mysteries that follow.

"Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door,
'"T is some visiter,' I muttered, tapping at my chamber door —
Only this, and nothing more.'"

Observe how artistically the poet has arranged the circumstances of this opening — how congruous all are. This congruity extends to the phraseology; every word is admirably selected and placed with reference to the whole. Even the word "napping" is well chosen, as bestowing a touch of the fantastic, which is subsequently introduced as an important component of the poem. Stanza 2d increases the distinctness and effect of the picture as already presented to us. The "Midnight Dreary" is a midnight "in the bleak December," and the "dying embers" are assuming strange and fantastic shapes upon the student's hearth. We now pass these externals and some words of exquisite melody let us into the secret of the rooted sorrow which has led to the lonely night-watching and fruitless study.

"Vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore —
For the rare and radiant maiden, *whom the angels named Lenore,*
Nameless here forever more."

A death was never more poetically told than in the italicised words:

The "tapping" is renewed —

"And the silken, sad, uncertain, rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me, filled me, with fantastic terrors never felt before,
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
'"T is some visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Some late visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Only this and nothing more.'"

After some stanzas, quaint and highly artistical, the raven is found at the window; I quote now continuously to the end.

[Here follows "The Raven."]

The rhythm of this poem is exquisite, its phraseology is in the highest degree musical and apt, the tone of the whole is wonderfully sustained and appropriate to the subject, which, full as it is of a wild and tender melancholy, is admirably well chosen. This is my honest judgment; I am fortified in it by high authority. Mr. Willis says: — "It is the most effective single example of fugitive poetry ever published in this country, and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift. It is one of those dainties which we *feed on*. It will stick to the memory of every one who reads it."

Miss Barrett says: — "This vivid writing! — this power *which is felt!* 'The Raven' has produced a sensation — a 'fit horror' here in England. Some of

my friends are taken by the fear of it, and some by the music. I hear of persons *haunted* by the Nevermore, and one acquaintance of mine, who has the misfortune of possessing a bust of Pallas, never can bear to look at it in the twilight. Our great poet, Mr. Browning, author of Paracelsus, etc., is enthusiastic in his admiration of the rhythm. . . . Then there is a tale of his which I do not find in this volume, but which is going the rounds of the newspapers, about mesmerism, throwing us all into most 'admired disorder,' or dreadful doubts as to whether it can be true, as the children say of ghost stories. The certain thing in the tale in question is the power of the writer, and the faculty he has of making horrible improbabilities seem near and familiar."

The prose narrative, "M. Valdemar's Case" — the story of which Miss Barrett speaks — is the most truth-like representation of the impossible ever written. M. Valdemar is mesmerized *in articulo mortis*. Months pass away, during which he appears to be in mesmeric sleep; the mesmeric influence is withdrawn, and instantly his body becomes putrid and loathsome — *he has been many months dead.* Will the reader believe that men were found to credit this wild story? And yet some very respectable people believed in its truth firmly. The editor of the Baltimore Visiter republished it as a statement of facts, and was at the pains to vouch for Mr. Poe's veracity. If the letter of a Mr. Collier,[1] published just after the original appearance of the story, was not a quiz, he also fell into the same trap. I understand that some foreign mesmeric journals, German and French, reprinted it as being what it purported to be — a true

[1] See Vol. XVII. —Ed.

account of mesmeric phenomena. That many others were deceived in like manner by this strange tale, in which, as Miss Barrett says, "the wonder and question are, can it be true?" is very probable.

With Mr. Poe's more recent productions I am not at all acquainted — excepting a review of Miss Barrett's works, and an essay on the philosophy of composition. The first of these contains a great deal of noble writing and excellent criticism; the last is an admirable specimen of analysis. I believe Mr. P. has been for some time ill — has recently sustained a heavy domestic bereavement — and is only now returning to his literary labors. The public will doubtless welcome the return of so favorite an author to pursuits in which heretofore he has done so much and so well.

Unnecessary as the labor may be, I will not conclude this postscript to Mr. Lowell's memoir, without making some remarks upon Mr. Poe's genius and writings generally.

Mr. P.'s most distinguishing power is that which made the extravagant fiction of M. Valdemar's Case sound like truth. He has De Foe's peculiar talent for filling up his pictures with minute life-like touches — for giving an air of remarkable naturalness and truth to whatever he paints. Some of his stories, written many years ago, are wonderful in this fidelity and distinctness of portraiture; "Hans Phaal," "A Descent into the Maelström," and "MS. Found in a Bottle," show it in an eminent degree. In the first of these a journey to the moon is described with the fullness and particularity of an ordinary traveller's journal; entries, astronomical and thermical, and, on reaching the moon, botanical, and zoölogical, are made with an inimitable matter-of-fact air. In A Descent into the

Maelström you are made fairly to feel yourself on the descending round of the vortex, convoying fleets of drift timber, and fragments of wrecks; the terrible whirl makes you giddy as you read. In the MS. Found in a Bottle we have a story as wild as the mind of man ever conceived, and yet made to sound like the most matter-of-fact veracious narrative of a seaman.

But in Mr. Poe, the peculiar talent to which we are indebted for Robinson Crusoe, and the memoirs of Captain Monroe, has an addition. Truthlike as nature itself, his strange fiction shows constantly the presence of a singularly adventurous, very wild, and thoroughly poetic imagination. Some sentences from them, which always impressed me deeply, will give full evidence of the success with which this rare imaginative power is made to adorn and ennoble his truthlike pictures. Take this passage from Ligeia, a wonderful story, written to show the triumph of the human will even over *death*. Ligeia, in whom the struggle between the will to live, and the power of death, has seemed to terminate in the defeat of the passionate will, is consigned to the tomb. Her husband married a second wife, "the fair-haired and blue-eyed Lady Rowena." By the sick bed of this second wife, who is dying from some mysterious cause, he sits.

. . . . . .

Again take this passage from the Fall of the House of Usher.

. . . . . .

These quoted passages — the "white and ghastly spectrum of the teeth" in "Berenice" — the visible vulture eye, and audible heart-beat in the "Tell-tale Heart" — the resemblance in "Morella" of the living child to the dead mother, becoming gradually fear-

ful, until the haunting eyes gleam out a terrible *identity*, and prove as in Ligeia the final conquest of the will over death — these and a thousand such clinging ideas, which Mr. P.'s writings abound in, prove indisputably that the fires of a great poet are seething under those analytic and narrative powers *in which no living writer equals him.*

This added gift of a daring and wild imagination is the source of much of the difference between our author and De Foe. De Foe loves and deals always with the homely. Mr. Poe is nervously afraid of the homely — has a creed that Beauty is the goddess of the Poet : — not Beauty with swelling bust, and lascivious carriage, exciting passions of the blood, but Beauty sublimated and cherished by the soul — the beauty of the Uranian, not Dionean Venus. De Foe gives us in the cheerful and delightful story of his colonist of the desert isles, (which has as sure a locality in a million minds as any genuine island has upon the maps,) a clear, plain, true-sounding narrative of matters that might occur any day. His love for the real makes him do so. The "real" of such a picture has not strangeness enough in its proportions for Mr. Poe's imagination ; and, with the same talent for truth-like narrative, to what different results of creation does not this imagination, scornful of the soberly real, lead him ! Led by it he loves to adventure into what in one of his poems he calls —

> "a wild weird clime
> Out of space, out of time ; " —

deals in mysteries of "life in death," dissects monomanias, exhibits convulsions of soul — in a word, wholly leaves beneath and behind him the wide and happy realm of the common cheerful life of man.

That he would be a greater favorite with the majority of readers if he brought his singular capacity for vivid and truth-like narrative to bear on subjects nearer ordinary life, and of a more cheerful and happy character, does not, I think, admit of a doubt. But whether with the few he is not all the more appreciable from the difficult nature of the fields which he has principally chosen, is questionable. For what he has done, many of the best minds of America, England and France, have awarded him praise; labors of a tamer nature might not have won it from such sources. For my individual part, having the seventy or more tales, analytic, mystic, grotesque, arabesque, always wonderful, often great, which his industry and fertility have already given us, I would like to read one cheerful book made by his *invention*, with little or no aid from its twin brother *imagination* — a book in his admirable style of full, minute, never tedious narrative — a book full of homely doings, of successful toils, of ingenious shifts and contrivances, of ruddy firesides — a book healthy and happy throughout, and with no poetry in it at all anywhere, except a good old English "poetic justice" in the end. Such a book, such as Mr. Poe could make it, would be a book for the million, and if it did nothing to exalt him with the few, would yet certainly *endear* him to them.

Mr. Lowell has gone deeply and discriminatingly into Mr. Poe's merits as a poet. Any elaborate remarks of mine on the same subject, would be out of place here. I will not, however, lose this opportunity of expressing an admiration which I have long entertained of the singular mastery of certain externals of his art which he everywhere exhibits in his verse. His rhythm, and his vocabulary, or phraseology, are

perhaps perfect. The reader has perceived the beauty of the rhythm in The Raven. Some other verses from poems to which Mr. Lowell has referred, are quite as remarkable for this beauty. Read these verses from Lenore : —

. . . . . .

And take these, in the most graceful of all measures —they are from " To One in Paradise."

" And all my days are trances
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams —
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams."

Along with wonderful beauty of rhythm, these verses show the exquisite taste in phraseology, the nice sense of melody and aptness in words, of which I spoke. We have direct evidence of this nice sense of verbal melody in some quotations which are introduced into the dramatic fragment " Politian." Lalage reads from a volume of our elder English Dramatists :

. . . . . .

I must conclude these insufficient remarks upon a writer worthy of high and honorable place amongst the leading creative minds of the age.

As regards the Wiley & Putnam publication of Mr. Poe's tales — a volume by which his rare literary claims have been most recently presented to the public — I think the book in some respects does him injustice. It contains twelve tales out of more than seventy ; and it is made up almost wholly of what may be called his analytic tales. This is not *representing* the author's mind in its various phases. A reader gathering his knowledge of Mr. Poe from this Wiley

& Putnam issue would perceive nothing of the diversity and variety for which his writings are in fact remarkable. Only the publication of all his stories, at one issue, in one book, would show this diversity and variety in their *full* force; but much more might have been done to represent his mind by a judicious and not wholly one-toned selection.[1]

THE LATE EDGAR A. POE.

By John R. Thompson.

[Southern Literary Messenger, November, 1849.]

So much has been said by the newspaper press of the country concerning this gifted child of genius, since his recent death, that our readers are already in possession of the leading incidents of his short, brilliant, erratic and unhappy career. It is quite unnecessary that we should recount them in this place. We feel it due to the dead, however, as editor of a magazine which owes its earliest celebrity to his efforts, that some recognition of his talent, on the part of the Messenger, should mingle with the general apotheosis which just now enrolls him on the list of "heroes in history and gods in song."

Mr. Poe became connected with the Messenger during the first year of its existence. He was commended to the favorable consideration of the proprietor, the late

[1] See Vol. XVII. for the Poe-Cooke correspondence on this subject. — Ed.

T. W. White, by the Honorable John P. Kennedy, who, as chairman of a committee, had just awarded to Poe the prize for the successful tale in a literary competition at Baltimore. Under his editorial management the work soon became well known everywhere. Perhaps no similar enterprise ever prospered so largely in its inception, and we doubt if any, in the same length of time — even Blackwood in the days of Dr. Maginn, whom Poe in some respects closely resembled — ever published so many shining articles from the same pen. Those who will turn to the first two volumes of the Messenger will be struck with the number and variety of his contributions. On one page may be found some lyric cadence, plaintive and inexpressibly sweet, the earliest vibrations of those chords which have since thrilled with so many wild and wondrous harmonies. On another some strange story of the German school, akin to the most fanciful legends of the Rhine, fascinates and astonishes the reader with the verisimilitude of its improbabilities. But it was in the editorial department of the magazine that his power was most conspicuously displayed. There he appeared as the critic, not always impartial, it may be, in the distribution of his praises, or correct in the positions he assumed, but ever merciless to the unlucky author who offended by a dull book. A blunder in this respect he considered worse than a crime, and visited it with corresponding vigor. Among the nascent novelists and newly fledged poetasters of fifteen years ago he came down "like a Visigoth marching on Rome." No elegant imbecile or conceited pedant, no matter whether he made his avatar under the auspices of a society, or with the *prestige* of a degree, but felt the lash of his severity. *Baccalaurei baculo portius quam laureo digni* was

the principle of his action in such cases, and to the last he continued to castigate impudent aspirants for the bays. Now that he is gone, the vast multitude of blockheads may breathe again, and we can imagine that we hear the shade of the departed crying out to them, in the epitaph designed for Robespierre,

> Passant ! ne plains point mon sort,
> Si je vivais, tu serais mort ! [1]

It will readily occur to the reader that such a course, while it gained subscribers to the review, was not well calculated to gain friends for the reviewer. And so Mr. Poe found it, for during the two years of his connection with the Messenger, he contrived to attach to himself animosities of the most enduring kind. It was the fashion with a large class to decry his literary pretensions, as poet and romancer and scholar to represent him as one who possessed little else than

> th' extravagancy
> And crazy ribaldry of fancy —

and to challenge his finest efforts with a chilling *cui bono*, while the critics of other lands and other tongues, the Athenæum and the *Revue des deux Mondes*, were warmly recognizing his high claims. They did not appreciate him. To the envious obscure, he might not indeed seem entitled to the first literary honors, for he was versed in a more profound learning and skilled in a more lofty minstrelsy, scholar by virtue of a larger erudition and poet by the transmission of a diviner spark.

Unquestionably he was a man of great genius.

[1] We translate it freely :

> Traveller ! forbear to mourn my lot,
> Thou would'st have died, if I had not.

NOTE BY THOMPSON.

Among the *littérateurs* of his day he stands out distinctively as an original writer and thinker. In nothing did he conform to established custom. Conventionality he condemned. Thus his writings admit of no classification. And yet in his most eccentric vagaries he was always correct. The fastidious reader may look in vain, even among his earlier poems — where "wild words wander here and there," — for an offence against rhetorical propriety. He did not easily pardon solecisms in others; he committed none himself. It is remarkable, too, that a mind so prone to unrestrained imaginings should be capable of analytic investigation or studious research. Yet few excelled Mr. Poe in power of analysis or patient application. Such are the contradictions of the human intellect. He was an impersonated antithesis.

The regret has been often expressed that Mr. Poe did not bring his singular capacity to bear on subjects nearer ordinary life and of a more cheerful nature than the gloomy incidents of his tales and sketches. P. P. Cooke, (the accomplished author of the Froissart Ballads, who, we predict, will one day take, by common consent, his rightful high position in American letters,) in a discriminating essay on the genius of Poe, published in this magazine for January, 1848, remarks upon this point: —

"For my individual part, having the seventy or more tales, analytic, mystic, grotesque, arabesque, always wonderful, often great, which his industry and fertility have already given us, I would like to read one cheerful book made by his *invention*, with little or no aid from its twin brother *imagination* — a book in his admirable style of full, minute, never tedious narrative — a book full of homely doings, of successful

toils, of ingenious shifts and contrivances, of ruddy firesides — a book happy and healthy throughout, and with no poetry in it at all anywhere, except a good old English poetic justice in the end."

That such a work would have greatly enhanced Mr. Poe's reputation with the million, we think, will scarcely be disputed. But it could not be. Mr. Poe was not the man to have produced a *home-book*. He had little of the domestic feeling and his thoughts were ever wandering. He was either in criticism or in the clouds, by turns a disciplinarian and a dreamer. And in his dreams, what visions came to him, may be gathered to some extent from the revealings he has given — visions wherein his fancy would stray off upon some new Walpurgis, or descend into the dark realms of the Inferno, and where occasionally, through the impenetrable gloom, the supernal beauty of Lenore would burst upon his sight, as did the glorified Beatrice on the rapt gaze of the Italian master.

The poems of Mr. Poe are remarkable, above all other characteristics, for the exceeding melody of the versification. "Ulalume" might be cited as a happy instance of this quality, but we prefer to quote "The Bells" from the last number of the Union Magazine. It was the design of the author, as he himself told us, to express in language the exact sounds of bells to the ear. He has succeeded, we think, far better than Southey, who attempted a similar feat, to tell us "how the waters come down at Lodore."

[Here follows "The Bells."]

The untimely death of Mr. Poe occasioned a very general feeling of regret, although little genuine sorrow was called forth by it, out of the narrow circle of his

relatives. We have received, in our private correspondence, from various quarters of the Union, warm tributes to his talent, some of which we take the liberty of quoting, though not designed for publication. A friend in the country writes : —

"Many who deem themselves perfect critics talk of the want of *moral* in the writings and particularly the poetry of Poe. They would have every one to write like Æsop, with the moral distinctly drawn at the end to prevent mistake. Such men would object to the meteor, or the lightning's flash, because it lasts only for the moment — and yet they speak the power of God, and fill our minds with the sublime more readily than does the enduring sunlight. It is thus with the writings of Poe. Every moment there comes across the darkness of his style a flash of that spirit which is not of earth. You cannot analyze the feeling — you cannot tell in what the beauty of a particular passage consists ; and yet you feel that deep pathos which only genius can incite — you feel the trembling of that melancholy chord which fills the soul with pleasant mournfulness — you feel that deep yearning for something brighter and better than this world can give — that unutterable gushing of the heart which springs up at the touch of the enchanter, as poured the stream from

'Horeb's rock, beneath the prophet's hand !'

"I wish I could convey to you the impression which the 'Raven' has made upon me. I had read it hastily in times gone by without appreciation ; but now it is a study to me — as I go along like Sinbad in the Valley of Diamonds, I find a new jewel at every step. The beautiful rhythm, the mournful cadence, still ring in the ear for hours after a perusal — whilst the heart is bowed down by the outpourings of a soul made desolate not alone by disappointed love, but by crushing of every hope, and every aspiration."

In a recent letter the following noble acknowledgment is made by the first of American poets — Henry W. Longfellow — towards whom, it must be said, Mr. Poe did not always act with justice. Mr. Longfellow will pardon us, we trust, for publishing what was intended as a private communication. The passage evidences a magnanimity which belongs only to great minds.

"What a melancholy death," says Mr. Longfellow, "is that of Mr. Poe — a man so richly endowed with genius! I never knew him personally, but have always entertained a high appreciation of his powers as a prose-writer and a poet. His prose is remarkably vigorous, direct and yet affluent; and his verse has a particular charm of melody, an atmosphere of true poetry about it, which is very winning. The harshness of his criticisms, I have never attributed to anything but the irritation of a sensitive nature, chafed by some indefinite sense of wrong."

It was not until within two years past that we ever met Mr. Poe, but during that time, and especially for two or three months previous to his death, we saw him very often. When in Richmond, he made the office of the Messenger a place of frequent resort. His conversation was always attractive, and at times very brilliant. Among modern authors his favorite was Tennyson, and he delighted to recite from "The Princess" the song "Tears, idle tears;" a fragment of which

— when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square, —

he pronounced unsurpassed by any image expressed in writing. The day before he left Richmond, he

placed in our hands for publication in the Messenger, the MS. of his last poem, which has since found its way (through a correspondent of a northern paper with whom Mr. Poe had left a copy) into the newspaper press, and been extensively circulated. As it was designed for this magazine, however, we publish it, even though all of our readers may have seen it before:

[Here follows "Annabel Lee."]

In what we have said of Mr. Poe, we have been considering only the brighter side of the picture. That he had many and sad infirmities cannot be questioned. Over these we would throw in charity the mantle of forgetfulness. The grave has come between our perception and his errors, and we pass them over in silence. They found indeed a mournful expiation in his alienated friendships and his early death.

J. R. T.

DEFENCE OF POE.

By George R. Graham.

[Graham's Magazine, 1850.]

My Dear Willis, — In an article of yours which accompanies the two beautiful volumes of the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, you have spoken with so much truth and delicacy of the deceased, and, with the magical touch of genius, have called so warmly up before me the memory of our lost friend as you and I both seem to have known him, that I feel warranted in addressing to you the few plain words I have to

say in defence of his character as set down by Mr. Griswold.

Although the article, it seems, appeared originally in the "New York Tribune,"[1] it met my eye for the first time in the volumes before me. I now purpose to take exception to it in the most public manner. I knew Mr. Poe well, far better than Mr. Griswold; and by the memory of old times, when he was an editor of "Graham," I pronounce this exceedingly ill-timed and unappreciative estimate of the character of our lost friend, *unfair and untrue*. It is Mr. Poe as seen by the writer while laboring under a fit of the nightmare, but so dark a picture has no resemblance to the *living* man. Accompanying these beautiful volumes, it is an immortal infamy, the death's head over the entrance to the garden of beauty, a horror that clings to the brow of morning, whispering of murder. It haunts the memory through every page of his writings, leaving upon the heart a sensation of utter gloom, a feeling almost of terror. The only relief we feel is in knowing that it is not true, that it is a fancy sketch of a perverted, jaundiced vision. The man who could deliberately say of Edgar Allan Poe, in a notice of his life and writings prefacing the volumes which were to become a priceless souvenir to all who loved him, that his death might startle many, "*but that few would be grieved by it*," and blast the whole fame of the man by such a paragraph as follows, is a judge dishonored. He is not Mr. Poe's peer, and I challenge him before the country even as a juror in the case.

"His harsh experience had deprived him of all faith in man or woman. He had made up his mind upon the

[1] The "Ludwig Article" expanded afterwards into the "Memoir." — Ed.

numberless complexities of the social world, and the whole system with him was an imposture. This conviction gave a direction to his shrewd and naturally unamiable character. Still, though he regarded society as *composed altogether of villains*, the sharpness of his intellect was not of that kind which enabled him to cope with villainy, while it continually caused him, by overshots, to fail of the success of honesty. He was in many respects like François Vivian in Bulwer's novel of 'The Caxtons.' Passion, in him, comprehended many of the worst emotions which militate against human happiness. You could not contradict him, but you raised quick choler; *you could not speak of wealth, but his cheek paled with gnawing envy.* The astonishing natural advantages of this poor boy, — his beauty, his readiness, the daring spirit that breathed around him like a fiery atmosphere, had raised his constitutional self-confidence into an arrogance that turned his very claims to admiration into prejudices against him. *Irascible, envious, bad enough*, but not the worst, for these salient angles were all varnished over with a cold, repellant cynicism; his passions vented themselves in sneers. *There seemed to him no moral susceptibility*; and, *what was more remarkable in a proud nature, little or nothing of the true point of honor.* He had, too, a morbid excess, that desire to rise which is vulgarly called ambition, but no wish for the esteem or the love of his species; only the hard wish to succeed, — not shine, nor serve, — succeed, that he might have the right to despise a world which galled his self-conceit."

Now, this is dastardly, and, what is worse, it is false. It is very adroitly done, with phrases very well turned, and with gleams of truth shining out from a setting so dusky as to look devilish. Mr. Griswold does not feel the worth of the man he has undervalued; he had no sympathies in common with him, and has

allowed old prejudices and old enmities to steal, insensibly perhaps, into the coloring of his picture. They were for years totally uncongenial, if not enemies, and during that period Mr. Poe, in a scathing lecture upon "The Poets of America," gave Mr. Griswold some raps over the knuckles of force sufficient to be remembered. He had, too, in the exercise of his functions as critic, put to death summarily the literary reputation of some of Mr. Griswold's best friends; and their ghosts cried in vain for him to avenge them during Poe's lifetime; and it almost seems as if the present hacking at the cold remains of him who struck them down, is a sort of compensation for duty long delayed, for reprisal long desired, but deferred. But without this, the opportunities afforded Mr. Griswold to estimate the character of Poe occurred, in the main, after his stability had been wrecked, his whole nature in a degree changed, and with all his prejudices aroused and active. Nor do I consider Mr. Griswold *competent*, with all the opportunities he may have cultivated or acquired, to act as his judge, to dissect that subtle and singularly fine intellect, to probe the motives and weigh the actions of that proud heart. His whole nature, that distinctive presence of the departed, which now stands impalpable, yet in strong outline before me, as I knew him and *felt* him to be, eludes the rude grasp of a mind so warped and uncongenial as Mr. Griswold's.

But it may be said, my dear Willis, that Mr. Poe himself deputed him to act as his literary executor, and that he must have felt some confidence, in his ability at least, if not in his integrity, to perform the functions imposed, with discretion and honor. I do not purpose, now, to enter into any examination of the ap-

pointment of Mr. Griswold, nor of the wisdom of his appointment, to the solemn trust of handing the fair fame of the deceased, unimpaired, to that posterity to which the dying poet bequeathed his legacy, but simply to question its faithful performance. Among the true friends of Poe in this city — and he had some such here — there are those, I am sure, that *he* did not class among *villains;* nor do *they* feel easy when they see their old friend dressed out, in his grave, in the habiliments of a scoundrel. There is something to them in this mode of procedure on the part of the literary executor that does not chime in with their notions of "the true point of honor." They had all of them looked upon our departed friend as singularly indifferent to wealth for its own sake, but as very positive in his opinions that the scale of social merit was not of the highest; that mind, somehow, was apt to be left out of the estimate altogether; and, partaking somewhat of his free way of thinking, his friends are startled to find they have entertained very unamiable convictions. As to his "quick choler" when he was contradicted, it depended a good deal upon the party denying, as well as upon the subject discussed. He was quick, it is true, to perceive mere quacks in literature, and somewhat apt to be hasty when pestered with them; but upon most other questions his natural amiability was not easily disturbed. Upon a subject that he understood thoroughly, he felt some right to be positive, if not arrogant, when addressing pretenders. His "astonishing natural advantages" *had* been very assiduously cultivated; his "daring spirit" was the anointed of genius; his self-confidence the proud conviction of both; and it was with something of a lofty scorn that he *attacked,* as well as re-

pelled, a crammed scholar of the hour, who attempted to palm upon him his ill-digested learning. Literature with him was religion; and he, its high priest, with a whip of scorpions, scourged the money-changers from the temple. In all else, he had the docility and kind-heartedness of a child. No man was more quickly touched by a kindness, none more prompt to return for an injury. For three or four years I knew him intimately, and for eighteen months saw him almost daily, much of the time writing or conversing at the same desk, knowing all his hopes, his fears, and little annoyances of life, as well as his high-hearted struggle with adverse fate; yet he was always the same polished gentleman, the quiet, unobtrusive, thoughtful scholar, the devoted husband, frugal in his personal expenses, punctual and unwearied in his industry, *and the soul of honor* in all his transactions. This, of course, was in his better days, and by them *we* judge the man. But even after his habits had changed, there was no literary man to whom I would more readily advance money for labor to be done. He kept his accounts, small as they were, with the accuracy of a banker. I append an account sent to me in his own hand, long after he had left Philadelphia, and after all knowledge of the transactions it recited had escaped my memory. I had returned him the story of "The Gold Bug," at his own request, as he found that he could dispose of it very advantageously elsewhere: —

We were square when I sold you the "Versification" article, for which you gave, first, $25, and afterwards $7 — in all	$32.00
Then you bought "The Gold Bug" for . .	52.00
I got both these back, so that I owed . . .	$84.00

Brought over		$84.00
You lent Mrs. Clemm		12.50
Making in all		$96.50
The review of "Flaccus" was 3¼ pp., which, $4, is	$15.00	
Lowell's poem is	10.00	
The review of Channing, 4 pp., is $16, of which I got $6, leaving . . .	10.00	
The review of Halleck, 4 pp., is $16, of which I got $10, leaving . . .	6.00	
The review of Reynolds, 2 pp. . .	8.00	
The review of Longfellow, 5 pp., is $20, of which I got $10, leaving .	10.00	
So that I have paid in all		59.00
Which leaves still due by me		$37.50

This, I find, was his uniform habit with others as well as myself, carefully recalling to mind his indebtedness with the fresh article sent. And this is the man who had "no moral susceptibility," and little or nothing of the "true point of honor." It may be a very plain business view of the question, but it strikes his friends that it may pass as something, as times go.

I shall never forget how solicitous of the happiness of his wife and mother-in-law he was whilst one of the editors of *Graham's Magazine* his whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. Except for their happiness, and the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own, I never heard him deplore the want of wealth. The truth is, he cared little for money, and knew less of its value, for he seemed to have no personal expenses. What he received from me, in regular monthly instal-

ments, went directly into the hands of his mother-in-law for family comforts, and *twice* only I remember his purchasing some rather expensive luxuries for his house, and then he was nervous to the degree of misery until he had, by extra articles, covered what he considered an imprudent indebtedness. His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her when she was ill, with all the fond fear and tender anxiety of a mother for her first-born, her slightest cough causing in him a shudder, a heart-chill that was visible. I rode out, one summer evening, with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain. It was the hourly *anticipation* of her loss that made him a sad and thoughtful man, and lent a mournful melody to his undying song.

It is true, that later in life Poe had much of those morbid feelings which a life of poverty and disappointment is so apt to engender in the heart of man — the sense of having been ill-used, misunderstood, and put aside by men of far less ability, and of none, — which preys upon the heart and clouds the brain of many a child of song. A consciousness of the inequalities of life, and of the abundant power of mere wealth, allied even to vulgarity, to override all distinctions, and to thrust itself, bedaubed with dirt and glittering with tinsel, into the high places of society, and the chief seats of the synagogue ; whilst he, a worshipper of the beautiful and true, who listened to the voices of angels and held delighted companionship with them as the cold throng swept disdainfully by him, was often

in danger of being thrust out, houseless, homeless, beggared, upon the world, with all his fine feelings strung to a tension of agony when he thought of his beautiful and delicate wife, dying hourly before his eyes. What wonder that he then poured out the vials of a long-treasured bitterness upon the injustice and hollowness of all society around him. The very natural question "Why did he not work and thrive?" is easily answered. It will not be *asked* by the many who know the precarious tenure by which literary men hold a mere living in this country. The avenues through which they can profitably reach the country are few, and crowded with aspirants for bread, as well as fame. The unfortunate tendency to cheapen every literary work to the lowest point of beggarly flimsiness in price and profit, prevents even the well-disposed from extending anything like an adequate support to even a part of the great throng which genius, talent, education, and even misfortune, force into the struggle. The character of Poe's mind was of such an order as not to be very widely in demand. The class of educated mind which he could readily and profitably address was small — the channels through which he could do so at all were few — and publishers all, or nearly all, contented with such pens as were already engaged, hesitated to incur the expense of his to an extent which would sufficiently remunerate him; hence, when he was fairly at sea, connected permanently with no publication, he suffered all the horrors of prospective destitution, with scarcely the ability of providing for immediate necessities; and at such moments, alas! the tempter often came, and as you have truly said, "*one glass*" of wine made him a madman. Let the moralist, who stands

print-like manuscrip
rolled, finds no ma
at heart, misery ahe
and gaunt famine d
the wayside, before
and whispers *oblivi*
God, or his own vic
terrible as that of ha
struck down to a
Heart and Will hav
doing. We must
organization of such
very tension and tone
— the passionate year
ful and true, utterly ur
and fierce competitorsh
of his that could be
brain. The unpeopled
the decay and mystery
the thunder of wind t
spirits that rode the bl
and the deep, metaphy
through the chambers
wealth, the High Char
was valid for rubies.

Could he have steppe

penny trumpet, he would have been fêted alive, and *perhaps* been praised when dead. But, no! his views of the duty of the critic were stern, and he felt that in praising an unworthy writer he committed dishonor. His pen was regulated by the highest sense of *duty*. By a keen analysis he separated and studied each piece which the skilful mechanist had put together. No part, however insignificant or apparently unimportant, escaped the rigid and patient scrutiny of his sagacious mind. The unfitted joint proved the bungler — the slightest blemish was a palpable fraud. He was the scrutinizing lapidary, who detected and exposed the most minute flaw in diamonds. The gem of first water shone the brighter for the truthful setting of his calm praise. He had the finest touch of soul for beauty — a delicate and hearty appreciation of worth. If his praise appeared tardy, it was of priceless value wher given. It was true as well as sincere. It was the stroke of honor that at once knighted the receiver. It was in the world of *mind* that he was king; and, with a fierce audacity, he felt and proclaimed himself autocrat. As a critic, he was despotic, supreme. Yet no man with more readiness would soften a harsh expression at the request of a friend, or if he himself felt that he had infused too great a degree of bitterness into his article, none would more readily soften it down after it was in type — though still maintaining the justness of his critical views. I do not believe that he wrote to give pain; but in combating what he conceived to be error, he used the strongest word that presented itself, even in conversation. He labored not so much to reform as to *exterminate* error, and thought the shortest process was to pull it up by the roots.

He was a worshipper of *intellect* — longing to grasp the power of mind that moves the stars — to bathe his soul in the dreams of seraphs. He was himself all ethereal, of a fine essence, that moved in an atmosphere of spirits — of spiritual beauty, overflowing and radiant — twin-brother with the angels, feeling their flashing wings upon his heart, and almost clasping them in his embrace. Of them, and as an expectant archangel of that high order of intellect, stepping out of himself, as it were, and interpreting the time he revelled in delicious luxury in a world beyond, with an audacity which we fear in madmen, but in genius worship as the inspiration of heaven.

But my object, in throwing together a few thoughts upon the character of Edgar Allan Poe, was not to attempt an elaborate criticism, but to say what might palliate grave faults that have been attributed to him, and to meet by facts unjust accusation; in a word, to give a mere outline of the man as he lived before me. I think I am warranted in saying to Mr. Griswold that he must review his decision. It will not stand the calm scrutiny of his own judgment, or of time, while it must be regarded by all the friends of Mr. Poe as an ill-judged and misplaced calumny upon that gifted son of genius.

Yours truly,

GEO. R. GRAHAM.

PHILADELPHIA, February 2, 1850.

To N. P. WILLIS, Esq.

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SECTION SIX

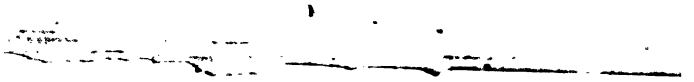
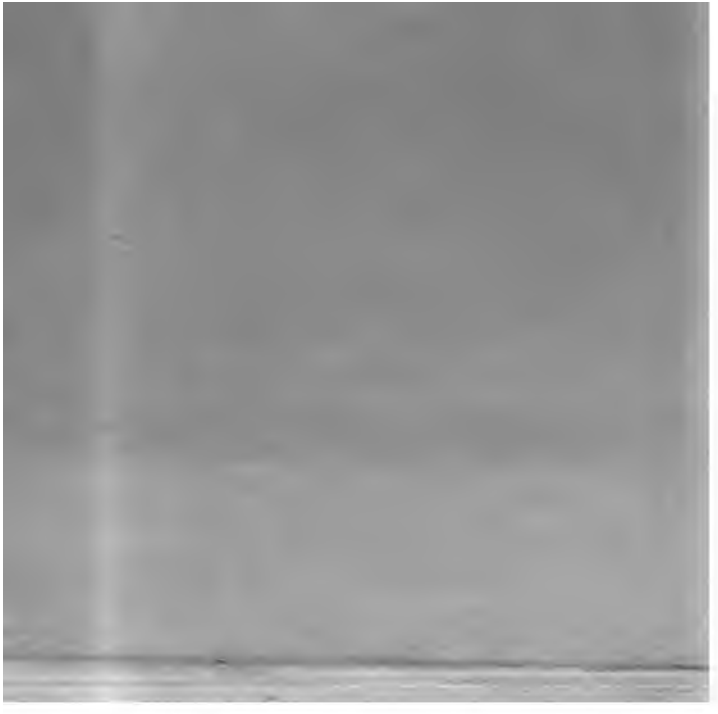
UNPUB

RLANE

Add

Helen Wh

POE'S HELEN. By Caroline Tickner. Illustrated. New Charles Scribner's Sons. $1.50.

THE life of Edgar Allan Poe stands out as the most romantic story in the history of American letters —and some phases of it have remained, after the lapse of more than half a century, our literature's most fascinating mystery. His brief engagement to Sarah Helen Whitman is one of these—a love story of which the objective facts have often been recounted, but wh has never quite been made plain. Until the publication the time of the Poe centenary in 1909, of the poet ters to Mrs. Whitman, very little was really known o romance. And even up to the present much remai explained.

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